TRUE GOLD OF TENNESSEE

ERNEST HUGH FITZPATRICK

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TRUE GOLD OF TENNESSEE

A Romance of the English-Speaking World

By
Ernest Hugh Fitzpatrick

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Chicago, Illinois

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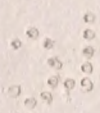

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"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists, one only, an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, however
Sad and disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power
Whose everlasting purposes, embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

These lines were enclosed in a letter to his father by Mr. Gladstone when a student at Oxford. Author unknown—probably Hallam.

—Morley's Life of Gladstone.

CHAPTER I

ENGLISH YOUTH IN A SOUTHERN PLANTATION HOME

NOT far from Knoxville, Tennessee, lies some of the finest agricultural land in the state; land upon which may be grown the choicest of tobacco, wheat, corn, oats, and where every variety of vegetable and fruit suited to the soil and climate, grows in profusion. There are still to be found many of the old and reputable families who have extensive holdings in that section of the state, a section redolent of pride and prejudice. Even in the mountainous parts of Tennessee which separate that state from North Carolina and Georgia are seen many a sturdy and rugged descendant from the early Scottish and English settlers. With one of the former our story begins.

Many years ago one Angus McKenneth, a brawny Scottish Highlander, had left his native heather, after the Glencoe Massacre, an appalling crime committed through an utter misconception on the part of the then reigning king, William of Orange, of the affairs of the Highlanders. The turbulence of the Highlanders had been greatly exaggerated, and grossly misrepresented to the English King by the Master of Stair. The king had, under an entirely erroneous conception, signed a decree sanctioning the punishment of the supposedly refractory Highland Clan of the Macdonalds. Angus MacKenneth, being closely allied by marriage to the Macdonalds, lost three of his stalwart sons in that cruel massacre. He fled with his wife and his only remaining son to North America, and finally settled upon the

Unaka Mountains of Eastern Tennessee, as near a counterpart of his beloved Grampians as he could find.

Here, having cleared the timber and brush, he erected a house of rough-hewn logs, from the surrounding forest, and settled down to a life of exile, for the most part morose and uncompromising. Never had there been in those parts such a settler as Angus MacKenneth. By his indefatigable industry, his patient and constant effort, together with his Scottish parsimony, he managed to wring a living from the soil. His undeniable integrity, and his unyielding austerity caused him to be a well-known character for miles around the sparsely settled country. Angus MacKenneth brooded long and deeply over the massacre of Glencoe, and the death of his three sons, and he continued to bear an inextinguishable hatred toward the Master of Stair, whose evil machinations had brought about that awful catastrophe to his kin and kinsmen, the Clan Macdonald. Such was the progenitor of one of the chief characters of our story.

The son who had come over with him, David by name, grew into manhood under the mellowing influence of mountain, stream, and forest, far from the madding strife of political and racial rancor, which had tended in so great a measure to embitter his father's otherwise chivalrous and kindly nature. David wedded a Scottish lass whose parents resided in that section of the country, and brought up a numerous progeny for King and Colony.

The Angus MacKenneth of our story was the seventh in line from that first Angus, who had settled in Tennessee, and was named after his ancient and redoubtable grandsire. Our Angus Mac-

Kenneth seemed to have inherited many of the traits and characteristics of his remote progenitor. He was a man built on herculean proportions, so characteristic of the Highland race, and, although possessing a warm, genial, and kindly disposition, he was nevertheless intolerant of wrong, inflexible in right; a proud, haughty, and austere man. The nearest neighbors of MacKenneth were Mr. Albert Wilcox and Mr. Stephen Lawrence. The Wilcoxes and the Lawrences long had been land owners in those parts, and both families were reputed to be wealthy.

The Wilcox and the Lawrence plantations adjoined, and it had become the ambition, almost the obsession, of the two families who had maintained for so many years an unbroken friendship, to ultimately unite their holdings. Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Angus MacKenneth had married two sisters, Grace and Mary Osborne. Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox were the happy parents of two healthy and beautiful children, George and Grace. Mr. and Mrs. MacKenneth had but one child, a girl, called after her mother, Mary. Mrs. MacKenneth died when Mary was but five years old, after a long sickness of what was then called mountain fever, a pernicious form of malaria.

Stephen Lawrence and his wife were fatally hurt in a railroad wreck, when their little girl, Emily, was barely two years old. The parents, before their death, placed their little girl under the sacred guardianship and care of their life-long friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, with the wish, that if it could be brought about, George Wilcox, their son, and Emily should marry when they came to be of suitable age.

Emily and Mary were about the same age, with but a few months between them. After the death

of his wife, Mr. Angus MacKenneth's affections centered upon his little girl Mary. He placed her for the time being in the household of the Wilcoxes, to be brought up and instructed with Emily. Here Mary remained until she had grown into young womanhood.

At the time our story begins, George Wilcox was twenty-one years of age, Grace, his sister, was nineteen, and Emily and Mary had just passed their sixteenth year. George had just returned to America, after spending two years at Oxford, England, and had brought with him a guest, a college chum of his, Reginald Streetfield, the only son of Sir William Streetfield, baronet, of Streetfield Manor, Gloucestershire, England.

This was the first visit of young Streetfield to the States, and naturally he was very interested in the many new views and angles of life, and methods adopted in the great western republic. Reginald Streetfield was a young man built on strong, athletic lines, life and vigor being apparent in every movement of his limbs and body. He was slightly under six feet in height, his hair was dark, thick, and profuse, indicative of great muscular strength. His eyes were of a dark brown, almost a hazel hue, with a thoughtful expression that may be described as being tinged with melancholy. His mouth was well shaped, with lips firmly set, showing determination. When he smiled, his whole face lighted up, contrasting with his usual thoughtful expression. His nose was well proportioned to his face, well shaped and well poised, his jaws set squarely, his cheek bones a little high, and his complexion clear and bright and at this time he was struggling with a light brown mustache. Tempera-

mentally, Reginald was fearless, optimistic, and good natured, kind almost to a point of femininity, and possessed all the perfect and finished manners incident to the careful bringing up of a young English aristocrat. He was in fact, *sans peur et sans reproche*.

George Wilcox was in some ways the opposite of Reginald. He was shy, diffident, and reserved. He had a well proportioned and muscular figure too, and he wore his auburn curly hair a little long. His eyes were small, round, and of a steel gray color. He was good natured extremely amiable and willing to please and oblige. His manners were pleasing, almost insinuating; he was ever ready to help a friend, and possessed a superabundance of animal spirits. Unlike many of his countrymen, of his own age, and of his station in life, he was entirely free from that self-confidence which often simulates self-assurance, causing many to be misunderstood outside their own country. He and Streetfield were about the same height and build, and when they walked out together, they invariably attracted attention by their splendid carriage, and bearing. Reginald and George were classmates, and had been much thrown into each other's company, becoming close friends. There was one phase of George's character which was not often discernible, for he most earnestly sought to overcome it, and to a large measure succeeded. When thwarted or antagonized he was prone to great fury and vindictiveness. This characteristic was doubtless due to the want of early discipline, and to the deference shown to his every whim and wish by his devoted and doting parents, more especially his mother, to whom he was greatly attached, and also by his sis-

ter Grace, who looked upon George as the incarnation of every manly virtue. Between brother and sister a deep bond of sympathy existed, "the two G's" as their father would often facetiously call them.

Grace was vivacious, accomplished, and a truly charming girl, resembling her brother to a great extent, and was herself of the fair type. She gloried in a magnificent head of light golden hair, and had large blue eyes, a well-shaped nose and mouth, the most inviting lips, and a fairly large and determined chin. She was of medium height, with an exquisitely shaped and well-knit figure.

Emily Lawrence was of a different mould. She was quiet, reserved, and with a sincere and frank expression, a figure slight and girlish, with dark brown hair and large brown eyes, with an expression of wonderment in them. She was of an utterly guileless, confiding, and unsuspecting nature. Loyalty, docility, and truth, were her marked characteristics.

Mary MacKenneth showed strength, power, and beauty in every line of her face, and movement of her body. Her expression was peculiarly pensive and serious. She exhibited the high cheek bones, the large dark blue eyes and almost black hair of her unmistakably Gaelic ancestry. Her figure was attractive, graceful, with splendidly poised limbs. Health, vigor, womanliness and chastity showed in every action of her supple body. Although just over sixteen years of age at this time, she showed all the marks of a fascinating, budding womanhood.

Such were the three girls who are to be so closely

related in the unfolding of this story, all charming examples of young American womanhood.

It was on the occasion of Grace's nineteenth birthday, May 2, 1878, that Mr. Albert Wilcox had summoned the family lawyer, Mr. Silas Thompson, to his plantation home, for the purpose of closing up some business matters pertaining to an estate which Grace had inherited from her uncle, a younger brother of Mr. Wilcox, who had died early and had constituted Grace his sole legatee. Silas Thompson was a character in his way. He was a type of man now fast dying out. Loyalty to his client was an article of religious faith with him. At this time he was about fifty years of age. He invariably indulged in the use of legal phraseology, and was wont to speak to and of his clients in the third person. For instance, when anyone propounded to him a question of law, he would invariably say, "Well, let me see! You are the party of the first part, and so and so the party of the second part. Now, as the party of the first part wishes to obtain from the party of the second part certain instruments and property, therefore it behooves the party of the second part to ascertain to what extent in law the party of the first part has the power and right to ask of him the party of the second part, the surrender of such instruments and property."

His conversations with Mr. Wilcox would invariably end by Mr. Wilcox crying out in desperation, "Damn the parties, Silas! Let us have the law." Silas Thompson would appear to be much shocked at this want of reverence for the law on the part of Mr. Wilcox, but he would descend to ordinary phraseology, and give Mr. Wilcox the information

needed. On this particular occasion, they were all seated in the library, Mr. Albert and Mrs. Wilcox, George, Grace, and Mr. Silas Thompson, occupying the chair at the head.

He carefully extracted from a tin roll the scroll of the will of the late Mr. Nicholas Wilcox, and after reading it in a most serious manner, said: "Now, Mr. Wilcox, and you Miss Grace, I want both of you to listen attentively to what I have to say. We will begin by designating the late Mr. Nicholas Wilcox the party of the first part, and you, Miss Grace, the party of the second part, and you, Mr. Albert Wilcox, the party of the third part. Now, therefore, as the party of the third part, that is you, Mr. Wilcox, desires to terminate his trust of the party of the second part, that is you, Miss Grace, and, inasmuch as the party of the second part has reached the age of nineteen, and as the will of the party of the first part, has designated that, at the age of nineteen the party of the third part has to relinquish to the party of the second part such property and estates which the party of the first part, has left in trust for the party of the second part, therefore, be it known that I, Silas Thompson, attorney-at-law, am called upon at and by the request of the party of the third part, to wit, Mr. Albert Wilcox, to take such legal steps and measures, duly prescribed by law, so that the party of the third part may be duly and legally released from his trust of such property and estates that have been in his keeping and supervision for the sole use and possession of the party of the second part, to wit, Miss Grace Wilcox."

"Silas, Silas, when will you ever learn to keep

those parties out? Do you not see that you hopelessly confuse us by adhering to that quaint legal phraseology of yours?" cried Mr. Wilcox.

"But, my dear Wilcox, the law requires it and says so. Why, Sir, the law would be inextricably mixed if we did not adhere to some set and clear statement of persons and facts."

"Why, Silas, if the law can make it more intricate and more confused than you have, with your jargon and jumble of parties of the first, second and third parts, then I would like to see it done," responded Mr. Wilcox.

This was the wrangle that invariably took place whenever Mr. Silas Thompson was called upon for professional advice by Mr. Albert Wilcox; and it was only after a good deal of good-natured badinage on the part of Mr. Wilcox that Mr. Silas Thompson was finally driven into a corner, and had to come down to everyday parlance.

The usual routine of law was assented to and Mr. Wilcox was released from his guardianship of the estate left to Grace by her Uncle.

"Come, Silas," said Mr. Wilcox, when their legal business was through, "I want you to meet George's friend, Mr. Reginald Streetfield, the only son of Sir William Streetfield, baronet, of Gloucester, England.

"Dear me, dear me, Wilcox. A son of a real, live baronet here? How remarkable, how prodigious, how strange, to be sure!" These were the three emphatic assertions that Mr. Silas Thompson would invariably repeat in relation to anything of an unusual nature, or to anything that appeared to him as unusual.

"There is nothing remarkable, prodigious, or

strange about it, Silas," responded Mr. Wilcox, repeating his words and mimicking his intonation. "Mr. Reginald Streetfield and George are college chums. George asked him over here on a visit."

"Would it not be remarkable, prodigious, and strange if this son and heir to an English baronetcy were to admire and to take back with him to England the party of the second part, that is you, Miss Grace," said Mr. Silas Thompson, jocularly.

"I do not see why there should be anything remarkable about that, Mr. Thompson," spoke up Grace, pretending to be affronted. "Why should not Mr. Streetfield or any other young man, for that matter, admire me? I am sure I am not so homely as you would like to make me out, at least I trust and hope not."

"Pardon me, Miss Grace, I did not mean it at all that way. Really, now, would it not be remarkable, prodigious and strange if I should have to call you the party of the second part, Lady Streetfield," said Mr. Silas Thompson."

"You dear, stupid man," said Grace, now appearing to be mollified. "Of course, it would appear strange to me to be addressed as My Lady this, that, or the other. But come, let us go into the next room, and I will introduce you to Mr. Streetfield. Remember he is simply a Mister. He is not a Lord or Sir, and will not be until he succeeds to his father's title."

"How remarkable—"

"I have just told you that there was nothing remarkable about it at all, Mr. Thompson," said Grace.

"Just as you say, just as you say, Miss Grace, but I assure you that it appears to me—"

'It does not want to appear anything," said Grace, laughing; and, taking Mr. Silas Thompson by the arm, she led him out of the room, much to the amusement of Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, who had taken an interest in the controversy. In the adjoining room Grace found Mr. Streetfield with her brother George, and there were there also, Emily Lawrence and Mary MacKenneth.

Mr. Streetfield," said Grace, advancing towards him, "I want you to meet an old friend of our family, Mr. Silas Thompson. Mr. Thompson, this is Mr. Reginald Streetfield, a college friend of George."

"I am sure I am happy to meet you, sir," said Mr. Thompson, shaking hands heartily with Mr. Streetfield.

"I am sure I reciprocate your feelings, Mr. Thompson," said Reginald with equal cordiality.

"You know, sir," said Mr. Silas Thompson, "I was just remarking to Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, and to Miss Grace, in the other room, on being told of your advent among us, that it is quite an event that you should visit us here in this remote section of the world, that it is, in fact, a remarkable, prodigious, and strange event but Miss Grace would not have it that way."

"Mr. Thompson! Mr. Thompson!" exclaimed Grace really alarmed that Mr. Thompson would go further, "You and I have just been through a controversy on that very point, and I came off victorious. You will not be permitted to re-open the argument."

"Just as you say, just as you say, Miss Grace," assented Mr. Thompson, and with this he gave his attention to Streetfield, and they both walked to

the other end of the room, and sitting down on a sofa, were soon engrossed in conversation.

Silas Thompson belonged to a class of lawyers seen for mnay years after the Revolutionary War. This class formed the prevailing type during the colonial period of American history. On these men tradition had a strong hold; they were men of stern character, honest to a fault, loyal to their clients and not much given to the acquisition of wealth and property; erudite men who took pride in the honor and the knowledge of their profession. Their prevailing costume was black and they wore tall hats with wide brims, long swallow-tail coats, short tight-fitting waistcoats, amply open to display a profusion of shirt-front, usually frilled, with high cravats, and trousers that fitted snugly to their nether limbs, drawn taut especially over their calves, and fitting tightly to the top of their shoes. These men were the friends and counsellors of everybody in their neighborhood, very much respected and looked up to. Silas Thompson was one of the last of his kind, a type that has been gradually supplanted by the more alert and up-to-date business man of the city.

Reginald Streetfield was greatly impressed with the unique and quaint mannerisms of Mr. Silas Thompson, and he was much surprised at the erudition and wide knowledge displayed by him.

Before he left Mr. Thompson asked Reginald to visit him.

"You will find a very unpretentious home, I warn you, Mr. Streetfield, but withal, a very welcome one, should you honor me with a visit," said Mr. Thompson.

Streetfield warmly thanked him for the extended

courtesy, and assured him that he would not fail to avail himself of his kind invitation.

Before Mr. Thompson left, Mr. Angus MacKenneth came into the room, and greeted him.

Mr. Silas Thompson was especially gracious to Mary MacKenneth, whom he seemed to regard with a fatherly affection. He had seen her grow up into womanhood from infancy, and he had been ever solicitous of her welfare, since the early loss of her mother, whom, to tell the truth, he had admired for many years, and when she married Mr. MacKenneth, the dashing young mountaineer, the good lawyer suffered in silence, and spent many an hour in secret grief. Nor indeed did any suspect that the quiet, unassuming, sedate country lawyer of any gentle feeling for the handsome and captivating Mary Osborne. Silas Thompson was loyalty itself to Angus, at whose home he was a frequent visitor, and he silently rejoiced in the happiness of one he had always regarded with a deep and abiding affection, so that when Mary was born, he constituted himself an uncle-elect to the tiny piece of humanity, as Angus MacKenneth called his baby girl.

When Mary's mother died, Silas Thompson was inconsolable, but nobody ever divined the depth of his affections, and his poignant grief was attributed to his friendship and sympathies for Angus MacKenneth.

The one great joy of Silas's life, at that time, was to bring some little present for Mary, and to witness her ingenuous joy on receiving it. Even when she had grown into young womanhood, Mary never omitted kissing her Uncle Si on first greeting him.

The pure, unalloyed, disinterested friendship on the part of Mr. Silas Thompson went a great way

toward assuaging the grief of Angus MacKenneth, who was never wearied of expounding to Silas the great virtues and wonderful accomplishments and capabilities of his deceased partner, and he ever found an eager and sympathetic listener.

"Hello, Si! How are you?" said Mr. MacKenneth, cheerily shaking hands with the lawyer. "Have you been having any more parties of the first and the second parts lately?" continued he, knowing well the lawyer's habit of using legal verbiage.

"Well, well, Angus. We have been having a party right here. The party of the second part, Miss Grace, has today reached the age of nineteen, and has come into possession of the property left her by her uncle, Nicholas Wilcox, and I am over here to look into that affair."

"We have all wished Grace many happy returns of the day, Uncle. We have not forgotten her birthday. Show Uncle Si all those pretty little gifts of yours, Grace," said Mary.

"Here is one from Mary, Mr. Thompson. It is a wild catskin muff. I shall always appreciate it. It was kind of Uncle Angus to go to all the trouble of trapping the cats and curing the skins and Mary has shown wonderful dexterity in making them up. I am going to kiss her again for that." And with that speech Grace went over to Mary, and, placing her arms around her, implanted on her cheek a resounding kiss, which made Mary blush with self-consciousness.

"It is good of you to think so much of it, Mary," said Grace, still blushing.

"What else did you receive, Grace?" asked Mr. Thompson.

"Oh, papa gave me this diamond brooch, mama a

new watch, as mine has been keeping such wretched time lately; George has given me that beautiful saddle mare of his, the one I have so long coveted, and Emily this lovely shawl. I have so many lovely things that I do not think I could enumerate them all. I am going to kiss Emily. I do not want her to think that I appreciate her gift any less than that of Mary."

"You are always deucedly lucky, Grace," interjected her brother George. "If Mr. Silas Thompson would only get you a sweetheart, he would doubtless fill your cup of desires and happiness to overflowing."

"One would think that you wanted to get me out of the way, George. I refuse to take you seriously. You know you cannot get along without your sister. You absurd boy!" retorted Grace.

"May I not offer my congratulations, Miss Wilcox?" said Mr. Reginald Streetfield, coming forward and warmly shaking hands with Grace.

"You will, all of you, make me positively blush, from pure self-consciousness, if you do not forget my birthday. I thank you, one and all. Everybody has been exceedingly kind and generous to me, and I am sure I want to appear appreciative. Let us all go into the garden, for Uncle Silas has unfortunately to hurry away. Let us escort him to the gate. Come, Emily, Mary, George and you, too, Mr. Streetfield."

So away went the happy party down the long lane that led to the gate. Here they must stop, and Uncle Silas Thompson must say something more, and Emily had to say something too, and then George, and then Mr. Streetfield, until Mr. Silas

Thompson had literally to tear himself away from the buoyant and joyous young people.

"Do not forget the party of the second part," called out Grace, laughingly, as he moved away, at which Silas Thompson shook his finger at her as he disappeared from sight.

"What a really interesting gentleman," remarked Mr. Streetfield, just for something to say.

"He is truly that, Streetfield, and every inch of him true blue," returned George.

"Dear Uncle Si," said Mary. "At times he is sad, too; I have often watched him in his pensive moments. He is my Uncle, you know, Mr. Streetfield. At least I consider him so, and papa says he is as fond of me as if I were his own girl."

"Now, dear, you know we all love Uncle Silas, just as much as you do, although we admit some jealousy of you," remarked Grace. "But there is the bell for lunch, and I see mother looking for us. I am going to run to her, and see if any of you can keep up with me." And with that Grace started off at a good speed, with all the rest of the party in her wake. Grace was a good runner and both George and Mr. Streetfield had to exert themselves to keep up with her, but finally George caught up with her, just as she reached the house; and taking Grace in his arms, he gave her a resounding kiss. "That is from all of us, Grace," he said.

"Let me go, let me go, you naughty boy!" exclaimed Grace, deeply blushing at his remark, owing doubtless to the presence of Reginald. With that the whole party went in to lunch.

CHAPTER II

ARCADIA IN TENNESSEE

THE village of Great Hope, Tennessee, was long known to the neighboring farmers and mountaineers as Sandy Hollow, from its very topographical situation. The site of the village was evidently once the bed of a mountain stream long since disappeared.

The village consisted of one long row of houses on either side of a broad sandy street, extending over a mile, and here and there away from their neighbors, as if in secluded disdain, stood a few houses more pretentious than the rest. Dwelling-houses and storehouses indiscriminately mingled together. It appeared as though John Smith had built himself a residence and had then erected a storeroom next door, hence cottages and business buildings mingled one with the other apparently upon the happiest of terms.

The village boasted of a blacksmith, whose smithy stood next door to the cottage in which he lived, so that at any time of the day or night the good-natured smith would turn out to fasten a loose horseshoe for a neighboring farmer or mountaineer. There was also a barbershop, and besides, three grocery stores, which were, in fact, general stores, which sold every imaginable article in demand in that neighborhood.

The village also boasted of three churches, one a Methodist, one a Baptist, and the third a Baptist church for the colored population. This colored or negro population lived segregated at one extremity of the village, and their church was situated in

their section. These churches were unpretentious wooden buildings, more or less unkempt-looking, and sadly in want of a fresh coat of paint. The village pastors had their habitations next to their respective churches.

On Sundays the inhabitants of Great Hope divided into three distinct groups, which wound their several ways to the church of their choice. Here, generally, a sallow-visaged, attenuated specimen of the divine calling held forth in vehement exhortation to his wandering flock, urging them to escape from the wrath to come. These pastors were looked upon as profoundly learned men, and an exhibition of their erudition would often astound the simple-minded natives. Theirs, indeed, was an unsophisticated, an unimaginative, good-natured, and simple life.

A funeral was the great event of the place. All attended the services who possibly could. The preacher invariably indulged in commendations, panegyrics, and in extravagant words of praise for the deceased member of the flock. He feelingly commented upon the great goodness of heart of the one who had gone before. The departed, if happening to be a man, had led a remarkable life, during his sojourn upon this earth; his great charity, his blameless family life, his civic virtues, particularly his patriotism, were all feelingly alluded to, even though the deceased during his long or short tenure of life, had been a usurer, a gambler, a horse-thief, and had been guilty of breaking every law of the decalogue. Smith is dead, and why not treat him handsomely, as they ought indeed to treat every man under similarly distressful circumstances. Would they not miss his familiar form sauntering down

the village street, or lounging in the bar-room, or sitting idly under the porch of the village post office, whittling a stick with his knife?

The village of Great Hope was to the simple folk the axis of the earth. They imagined and verily believed that the direst calamities would overtake the whole world should a catastrophe happen and blot out this little village of theirs.

Then there was the village doctor, usually a full-bearded rugged, man, who could be seen at all times riding slowly over the mountain paths, with saddle-bags well filled with medicine. A doctor was supposed to answer every call upon his services, whether for pay or for no pay; he was the one man the villagers insisted should work in good weather, and in stormy weather; in good health or in bad health; in good report or in evil report. His familiar figure could often be seen silhouetted on his faithful nag at all hours of the day and night, slowly wending his laborious way over the mountain bridle-paths or cantering briskly along the roads of the countryside.

The doctor and the village lawyer were generally warm friends, and both were highly respected and looked up to with awe as being the wisest and the sagest of mankind.

At the time when our story begins, Mr. Silas Thompson was the local attorney-at-law at Great Hope, and a new doctor had just arrived, as the old one had decided to seek a less exacting location. He had grown old and worn in the services of the people of Great Hope, and the surrounding neighborhood. The new doctor fortunately proved to be a man of far greater ability than the usual standard of country doctors of those parts.

In addition to all these advantages, the village of Great Hope could boast of four saloons or thirst parlors, as they not very euphonistically termed them, ready at all times , and at all hours to cater to the bibulous minded of the population of the village, country, and mountain side.

Still, on the whole, the village of Great Hope was not unpicturesque. Long even lines of poplars shaded the street in double rows on either side, while here and there could be seen a primeval oak, or walnut, which had escaped the onward rush of a forest-devastating civilization.

Such was the village of Great Hope, Tennessee, wherein Silas Thompson, attorney-at-law, lived and had his being. Silas, as he was called by the male inhabitants of the village and of the country for miles around, lived in a house situated at the extreme northern part of the village. It stood some little way back from the main line of houses. Standing in front of Mr. Thompson's house were two stately poplar trees, of which he was inordinately proud, and behind the house were some magnificent magnolias, and further back again a fairly extensive orchard and garden. In summer, when the weather permitted, Mr. Silas Thompson, when at home, spent a great deal of his time during the day under the shade of these magnificent trees. Here he would place a table upon which he would lay his material for writing, with which he kept up a perpetual struggle during gusty days; nor did he appear petulant or impatient even when an unusually brisk catspaw scattered his papers in various directions. He would chase after them, and gather them up, and carefully place them under a marble letter-weight. "Move again," he would

apostrophize, "if you dare." In a short time, when searching for some particular document, he would disturb the safe arrangement of his papers, and then would imperturbably go through the same performance.

Mr. Silas Thompson's house was built fairly commodiously. It was a one-story cottage, surrounded on three of its sides by a wide and substantially built veranda or porch. The house stood a good four feet from the ground. The interior consisted of five living rooms. The first he used as a general office, in which he conducted his business. An inner room constituted his library and study. This he would call, with humorous gravity, his sanctum sanctorum. Of the three remaining rooms, one was the dining room, the next his bedroom, and the third the guest's room. The kitchen and the bathroom buttressed outwardly from the rear of the house. None of the rooms boasted of carpets. The floors, being of hardwood, were kept scrupulously clean and beautifully polished. Each room had an open fireplace, and a neatly constructed mantel. When the weather was cold and chilly, wood was burned in these fireplaces.

Mr. Silas Thompson's housekeeper was an old colored lady known to everybody as Aunt Janet. She lived in a little cottage by herself, a short distance from the main building. Aunt Janet was a most unusual woman, and was never known to be delinquent in her duty of looking after the well-being and comfort of her employer. She had long been an old woman, how long nobody ever knew, and she never seemed to grow any older, and apparently retained the vigor of her middle age. How the worthy lawyer had first discovered her was a

mystery, and Aunt Janet was very loath to speak about herself. She took upon herself at various times the dictation of the good lawyer's fees. The lawyer's household was plentifully supplied with corn, bacon, eggs, beans, fruit of all kinds when in season, fowls, salt-pork, and even turkeys, geese, and ducks. All these articles were tendered to him at various times as fees in kind, but whenever Aunt Janet happened to be super-abundantly supplied with any one of these articles, she would place a sign upon the porch, which read as follows: "No eggs, butter, salt-pork, and hams, etc., etc., taken this month." And as for Silas Thompson, had he no such guardian angel, his household would verily have in a short while borne a resemblance to the commissariat of an army corps. But the constant vigilance of Aunt Janet saved the day, and she was known to trudge up a steep mountain path with quite a heavy load to return to a client, his side of bacon, his ham, or beans, etc., when he had dared to disregard her warnings. Thus the lawyer's clients came to regard Aunt Janet's admonitions as final, and they would be therefore forced to pay their obligations to the lawyer in the current coin. This the baffled clients often resented doing, and only did it with a very bad grace. The fear of Aunt Janet would impel them to heed her timely warning.

In this little village and in the surrounding country there was usually a considerable amount of litigation going on, and the lawyer was by no means a laggard in his profession. His reputation for good advice, integrity, and able pleading, had spread for miles around. In his frequent appearance at the county court, he was held in just es-

teem by his fellow practitioners. His knowledge of federal, state, and common law was profound, and his clear-cut reasonings, although embellished by many a quaint expression, were admitted by all. He was jocularly known among his legal brethren and referred to by them, as the party of the first part. One of these would say to another, as they saw Silas approaching: "Hello, here comes the party of the first part."

Mr. Silas Thompson submitted with a good grace to these good-natured jibes of his friends, but all the jibes in the world would not have altered his use of legal phraseology. His quaint and old-fashioned garbed figure contrasted strangely with the more modern attire of his brother practitioners. Of this he appeared to be wholly unconscious. Being a man of utmost probity, he would often appealingly admonish a client to desist from entering into a lawsuit; but once having accepted a case, he would throw the last ounce of his energy and forensic talent into the suit.

It is not to be supposed that Mr. Silas Thompson was a poor man. He was far from that. He had accumulated a modest competency. His habits were frugal, his wants few, and his industry great. He had wandered from the village of Great Hope on but few occasions. He had once spent a week in the national capital, and he had also visited New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and a few other eastern cities, and he had even been to Eastern Canada, and visited Quebec, and Montreal, and had proceeded from there to Newfoundland. On one occasion he had accompanied a client as far as San Francisco, but these journeys had taken place at intervals of years. Silas Thompson's one great

passion in life was his loving solicitude for Mary MacKenneth. He had long decided that after suitably providing for Aunt Janet, Mary would be the beneficiary of his modest fortune.

Mr. Silas Thompson generally managed to see Mary at least one a week, and Mary and her father were by no means infrequent guests at his house. Whenever Mr. MacKenneth happened to have business in Great Hope, he would invariably have Mary accompany him. Mary was the apple of Aunt Janet's eye, and she, on her part, never tired of knitting or making something useful for Aunt Janet, and was frequently surprising that good dame with useful gifts.

We greatly suspect that Aunt Janet must have entertained some suspicion of the lawyer's feelings towards Mary's mother, for she not infrequently recalled her, and recounted many an anecdote of her childhood and girlhood days.

"Dat was shuah a pity, Massa Silas," she would often say. "Dat such a good woman as that deah Mrs. Angus MacKenneah should be taken away by de good Lawd to de bettah lan' leavin' dat deah gal behind hah', an' well do I 'membah, Massa Silas, when dat woman was but a teeny weeny gal. How she would come with heah father, old man Osbone to dis village and would keep peepin' in at dah stoahs, and the stoahkeepahs would stop thar waak, and dat is de truf, Massa Silas, would stop thar waak, and stah dey would, at hah, like she was the app'ition of some good angel. And now to see dat Miss Mary comin' down de staaht one would tink it waah haah deah mothah hahself come to life again on his aath. Don' you tink, Massa Silas, dat deah is a mighty 'semblance 'tween dem

two? Was you not to say so, Massa Silas, I would tink you have not de possessions of a asimulatin' mind."

To all this poor Silas would listen like a hungry animal craving for more, and Aunt Janet must have had a faint idea that she was awakening in her master's breast pleasant memories even though they were poignant.

Mr. Streetfield had been about a week at the Wilcox plantation when he bethought that he would pay his promised visit to Mr. Silas Thompson, so he arranged for the use of a horse and buggy from the Wilcox stables, and drove over to the village of Great Hope. On arriving at the village, he was stared at with keen curiosity by the villagers, who were quick to notice the presence of a stranger in the neighborhood. There was a certain man in that village, a Mr. Matthew Stephens, who gave one the idea of what a reincarnated Noah would have looked like. He wore a long beard, tinged with gray, which reached almost to his waistline. He was rather a fine looking man, with an intelligent face, notwithstanding the oddity of his hirsuteness. This man's great passion in life was the playing of checkers and chess. He would content himself for hours, either playing or looking on at a game. He would often engage the lawyer in a game of chess. Silas Thompson was a skillful player, and Matthew Stephens was skillful enough to interest him. Matthew Stephens was never seen without a cigar. He had acquired the skill to smoke a cigar to its bittermost end. To do this successfully, he resorted to the aid of a match or a toothpick, with which he would dexterously penetrate the burning stump and hold it in safety

to his lips, and puff at it complacently to its utter end, the cigar having become altogether too small to hold between his fingers or with his lips. Mr. Matthew Stephens was by occupation an insurance agent. He solicited fire and life insurance, and kept a pair of ponies and a buggy, in which buggy he could frequently be seen scouring the country in search of business. Stephens spoke in rather a pleasant drawl, using many of the odd colloquialisms that flourished in that section of the state. It so happened that Mr. Streetfield questioned Stephens as to the whereabouts of Mr. Silas Thompson's house, and he kindly volunteered to guide Reginald to the lawyer's residence, jumping into the buggy beside him to do so.

During the short interval that elapsed, Mr. Mat Stephens had adroitly questioned Reginald, as to his name, his nationality, his place of residence in England, his father's occupation, his own occupation, the reasons for his being in America, the length of time he purposed staying, what he thought of the country, and how he liked it. To all of these questions Reginald had apparently vouchsafed satisfactory answers, for Mr. Mat Stephens proceeded to descant upon the many virtues of Mr. Silas Thompson. "Why, sir," he said, "he is the smartest man in the country. He cannot be beat anywhere for law. That man, sir, has forgotten more than all of us in the village ever knew. You can tell your friends, Mr. Streetfield, when you get back to England, that you met one of the smartest men in America."

When they arrived at their destination, Mr. Silas Thompson having observed them approaching, was awaiting their advent on the porch, and

he came forward to greet Mr. Streetfield.

"Hello, Si," said Mr. Stephens, "I have directed this stranger to your house. How are things, Silas? Pretty good, I hope. Well, I guess I better be walking back. Good-bye, sir. I am very happy to have made your acquaintance. Any time you are down this way, be sure to ask for Mat Stephens, and if I can accommodate you in any way, I will just be too glad to do so. I am in the insurance business, Mr. Streetfield, and my office is in the middle of the block, on the east side of the street, the next building south of the post-office. I have, Mr. Streetfield, a right smart pair of ponies, and I would like some time to show you around our country. We have a very lovely country around here, and some of the finest land that the sun shines on. Good-bye, sir. Good luck to you. Don't forget to give me a call the next time you are in Great Hope. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Mr. Stephens," said Mr. Streetfield, cheerily. "You have been most kind, and I want to thank you. I trust I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again. You can depend upon my taking advantage of your kind offer to drive me around the country."

Mr. Stephens, shaking hands with Streetfield and ta-ta-ing to Silas, sauntered slowly down the street. Mr. Silas Thompson, after greeting Mr. Streetfield, led the way into the house. "Welcome, sir," he said. "I assure you I highly appreciate your visit." They entered the house together, and Mr. Streetfield made a hasty inventory of its contents. All around the room setting taut against the wall, were crudely-made bookcases filled with law and other books. In the center of the room

was a long heavy mahogany-stained table, upon which lay, apparently in the direst confusion, books and papers of all kinds, pens, pencils, blotting-pads, and several sheets of large white foolscap paper. There were several heavy rocking-chairs, and a few small upright ones scattered about the room, the walls of which were neatly papered and hung all over with large framed engravings of Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and other eminent Americans and also several well-known pictures of the battles of the Civil war, Shiloh, Look-out Mountain, Antietam, Coal Harbor, and Gettysburg.

Mr. Streetfield sat down in one of the rocking chairs that Mr. Silas Thompson had drawn up, while he sat on another. They talked long and discoursed on many topics, tete-a-tete.

Mr. Silas Thompson was a well-informed man, and singularly free from prejudice, religious, national, political, or social, the very best type, indeed, of an American citizen. He was fond of talking when he found an intelligent and ready listener, and he certainly found one in Mr. Streetfield, who was only too eager to learn so many facts first-hand, as it were. It was not long before Mr. Thompson began to speak of Mary MacKenneth; and Mr. Streetfield was soon in possession of all the facts of her ancestry, her mother's early demise, and he heard all about her wonderful qualifications and gifts. The lawyer, who was an inveterate smoker, produced some very fine cigars, which Mr. Streetfield found much to his liking. Thus he passed several very pleasant hours. Mr. Streetfield learned all about the Wilcoxes, and he heard about Emily Lawrence, and her parents, but

he was puzzled to find that the good lawyer was a little cynical about George Wilcox, although he said nothing of a disparaging nature about him. It was in disposition, that Mr. Streetfield gauged that Mr. Thompson found George wanting. He conveyed the impression to him that George Wilcox had an uncertain disposition, but otherwise he seemed to regard him as a clever, industrious, well-educated, and well-meaning young man.

As Mr. Streetfield was about to say farewell to Mr. Thompson, Angus MacKenneth and Mary drove up in a buggy, the exact counterpart of the one he had driven over in. The greetings over, Mr. MacKenneth asked Streetfield whether he purposed driving back to the Wilcox plantation, and if so, would he take Mary with him, as he had some business with Mr. Silas Thompson, and with two or three others in the village.

To this request Mr. Streetfield readily acceded. He had admired from the first the splendid poise and carriage of the girl, her innate modesty, and her utter lack of pretension and self-assertion, and the absence of anything savoring of prudery.

It required quite a little skill to get in and out of one of these American buggies gracefully, and one has to acquire the knack. If one purposes sitting on the right, the left foot would have to be placed on the step, and by quick rotary movement the body has to be swung inwards, then backwards, and outwards, in a half-circle, so as to accommodate itself to the right hand seat, and vice versa with the left. The reverse of this process has to be gone through in getting out of it. Mary and Mr. Streetfield being seated, Mary on the right, as she had volunteered to drive, they started away

with a jerk, for the horse evidently appreciated the fact that he was now on his homeward journey. Mr. Streetfield was greatly charmed with the naive conversation of the girl by his side, and she appeared perfectly willing to talk with the utter absence of any restraint or backwardness. Mary was so thoroughly natural that to act otherwise would have been *tout au contraire,* of her whole character.

"You ask me," she said, replying to his question. "How I fill in my hours. To begin at the beginning, I rise early. I am always up with the birds. Father likes his breakfast early, so I get him his breakfast. After our breakfast, I do the housework; not having a very pretentious establishment, it does not take me overly long. I generally get through by nine o'clock. Then I sit down and work at my studies for a little while. After that I go for a walk, for half an hour or so, or if father wishes me to accompany him anywhere, I go with him. Usually we are back in time for dinner, that is, if we have not already dined with Uncle Si. Sometimes we drive over to Uncle Wilcox for dinner. When at home, I usually get dinner for father at twelve, and get through my after-dinner work by one, or half past. After that I am free to do as I like until supper time. But I generally go over to the Wilcoxes in the afternoons for instruction. Emily and I, you know, share a governess. I take lessons in music, in singing, in drawing, in English literature, in French, German, Latin, General history, and in other subjects such as mathematics, geography, etc. We have an excellent teacher, and papa seems quite satisfied with the progress I am making with my studies. We usually

have supper at half past five, and during the long winter evenings I often play and sing for papa, for an hour or so, and should he be otherwise engaged, I read, study, or sew. Sometimes father and I play chess. Father is fond of the game, and although I am but a poor opponent, I sometimes win. We usually go to bed about half past nine or ten, as we are fairly early risers, as I have already told you. During the long summer evenings we frequently drive over to the Wilcoxes or to Great Hope to see Uncle Si. This has been my life ever since I came back to our mountain home, for since mother's death I have been staying at the Wilcoxes, taking my studies with Emily, and we have always shared a governess between us. We have an admirable teacher, but I am afraid we try her patience very much at times by our inattention and carelessness. She is particularly proficient in mathematics, and has made of me, I believe, a fairly good mathematician. She is very scrupulous in her choice of words, and sternly reproves us when we make use of a slang expression. She appears horrified whenever she detects either Emily or myself using anything but pure, uncorrupted English. Besides, I have a pony, and we are great friends. I often ride him, and I think I know every square yard of these mountain sides. He is a sure footed animal, and I feel perfectly safe on his back, and he literally scales the mountain bridle-paths. On Sundays we go to church at Great Hope, and then over to Uncle Si's or perhaps to Uncle Wilcox's for dinner. So, taking one day with another, I pass my life placidly and like the brooklet I keep the even tenor of my way."

The charming naiveté and unconventional *flux*

de mots, or flow of words from Mary, would have charmed any hearer. Upon the strong and impulsive nature of Reginald Streetfield, it had a most intensely interesting effect. Mary was but a child, and so Mr. Streetfield regarded her, and he was constrained *le droit du plus fort* to ponder to himself that when Mary grew into full womanhood, she bade fair to drive the young men of her acquaintance to desperation. Mary was not in the least a coquette, but was simply a girl that lived close to nature, and had succeeded unconsciously, to be sure, in blending all that was beautiful and chaste around her into her own being.

Mary, on her part, was greatly interested to learn of England, and of the English, of English ways, and of Reginald's life in college, and of his association with her cousin George Wilcox, and how it all came about, and of their many escapades and pranks in Oxford. Upon all of these, Reginald in his turn, interestingly descanted.

Reginald, however, was somewhat concerned to observe that Mary, too, spoke of George Wilcox with some reserve; and, coupling this with what Mr. Silas Thompson had hinted, and with his own observation, he concluded that Mary resented the attentions which he could not help observing her cousin George had perhaps unintentionally obliged her to accept. Reginald was aware of the fact that there was an understanding between George and his parents that he was to marry Emily Lawrence, when that young lady was grown up. He accordingly dismissed from his mind any surmises of an unworthy nature as being disloyal to his old friend George. Mr. Streetfield was by nature a close observer of men and things, and it was seldom that

anything noteworthy escaped him, but he was by no manner of means a Paul Pry. His powers of observation had been well developed at home, at school, and at college. His fondness for such studies as botany, natural history, and biology, and his work in microscopical analysis, all these had helped to develop in him this talent of observation that he already possessed in an eminent degree.

In due time they arrived at the Wilcox plantation, and, having safely deposited Mary there, Reginald turned the horse and buggy over to the care of a son of Africa, one of the servants at the Wilcox plantation.

Reginald Streetfield's stay in Tennessee was of a most enjoyable and delightful nature. He had not forgotten the generous offer of Mr. Matthew Stephens to drive him over the country, and we may as well state here as elsewhere that Mr. Mat Stephens and Reginald became quite good friends. Mr. Mat Stephens, true to his word, helped greatly toward making Reginald's stay in Tennessee such a delightful one. He would often drive over to the Wilcox plantation in his buggy, with his really splendid ponies, and would take Mr. Streetfield with him all over the country, passing through entrancingly beautiful and fertile valleys, and between the mountain crags and over their heavily timbered sides. In this way Reginald was able to explore every nook and cranny in that section of the country. Mr. Mat Stephens' mind was replete with local lore, and many an interesting description did he give Reginald, and many an interesting tale did he relate of the mountain folk. These drives, with Matthew Stephens, Reginald recalled for many a

year afterward as one of the most enjoyable features of his stay in Tennessee.

The Wilcoxes and their friends, Silas Thompson, Angus MacKenneth, and Miss Mary MacKenneth, were as manna in the wilderness to Reginald, so that when the hour for his departure drew near, he was loath to part from his hospitable and kind friends, and their interesting neighbors. A warm friendship had sprung up between Mr. Thompson and himself, also with Mr. Angus MacKenneth, and as for Mary, Reginald regarded her with an almost brotherly affection.

Reginald, during his frequent perigrinations through Great Hope and also by his associations with Silas Thompson and Mr. Mat Stephens had become known to many of the villagers, from whom his frank and friendly demeanor elicited a generous response. He was greatly interested in their peculiar traits and characteristics, and their quaint idioms of speech, which strongly reminded him of Englishmen who had lived and had had their being a century ago. There is not a shadow of a doubt that some of the instincts of the ancient Briton have been preserved by the descendants of those who long ago had migrated to the American colonies, and who have resided there since, in out of the way and distant provinces, far from the madding influences of an ever changing world. Some highly commendable and admirable instincts and traits, not often met with and seen in the present day Briton, have been preserved by these sequestered descendants of ancient Britons in these distant places.

Mr. Streetfield had promised many of his newly made friends that he would visit them again, even

though he would have to make a special journey to do so.

"I reckon," said one villager, who was the justice of the peace of the village, and an acknowledged sage, "I reckon that this here Britisher has certainly made many friends among us, and they tell me he is one of them gol-darned aristocrats, too. It beats all what notions we get of them British Lords. But I am going to take all of mine back. Take it all back, what I used to think. Why, boys, I used to think that them Lords were that proud, haughty, and arrogant, with no thought at all for other people's feelings, but this here Mr. Streetfield, he is surely a friendly man, and falls right in with our American spirit. 'Your name is Streetfire,' says I, when I was introduced to him. 'No, Streetfield,' says he. 'An odd name,' says I. 'Hard to remember?' asks he. 'Very hard,' says I. 'Call me Reginald then. That is not hard to remember. It will simplify matters,' says he. Now what do you think of a British aristocrat asking a poor unbeknown man like myself, living in this here village, to call him by his given name? Say, boys, that young man, he is of the right sort. He would make a right good American citizen, and would, I am sure, gol darn it, boys, if he were a citizen, vote the democratic ticket."

"What in the devil's name, Jake, does this young man know of the democratic ticket or party? Maybe if he lived in this country he would soon be hobnobbing with them money bugs, but I agree with you, Jake, that he is a good sort, and just the kind of a young feller I would like to see senator from Tennessee. There is no upstart nonsense about him. What do you all say, boys?"

"Aye! Aye, you are right, Tim, and right sorry are we to see him go," answered one of the crowd.

Thus was the sentiment of this little village expressed towards Mr. Streetfield on his departure for England.

It was decided that George Wilcox and Mr. Silas Thompson were to accompany Mr. Streetfield to Boston, from which port he intended sailing. The almost boyish delight, shown by Mr. Silas Thompson at the prospect of accompanying Reginald to Boston was refreshing to see.

"Now, Mr. Streetfield," he said on being asked. "We shall indeed be a party of three parts. You, sir, are to be the party of the first part, and Mr. George Wilcox, the party of the second part, and my insignificant self, the party of the third part. Now, whereas the party of the first part, having graciously vouchsafed to invite the party of the third part, to wit, one Silas Thompson, he, the party of the third part, wishes to express his appreciation to the party of the first part, to wit, Reginald Streetfield, and he wishes to assure him, the party of the first part, that he, Mr. Silas Thompson, the party of the third part does most cordially accept that invitation."

Thus it came about that Mr. Silas Thompson, with the solicitous aid of Aunt Janet, was arrayed in his very best county-court suit, with black trousers, tightly fitting his thin legs down to the top of his shoes, and a waistcoat of spotlessly laundered white pique, with an ample opening exhibiting a profusion of white frilled shirt-front, a white cravat, with a black swallow-tail coat, and a tall black hat with a wide brim.

Silas Thompson, thus arrayed, might have readily just stepped out of the eighteenth century. Mr. Streetfield and George Wilcox were highly amused at his odd and grotesque appearance, and Mr. Wilcox did not refrain from passing many a pleasantry upon Mr. Thompson's appearance. All of these quips seemed to immeasurably gratify Mr. Thompson, so much so that Streetfield was at a loss to know how to act, whether to come to the rescue of Mr. Thompson, or to join in the laughter of George Wilcox; and he finally compromised by asking his friend Wilcox to cease from his witticisms on the personal appearance of Silas, and give some attention to other topics. This had the desired effect. But Mr. Streetfield was much amused when Mr. Thompson very seriously remarked to him, "Do you know, Mr. Streetfield, that our profession lost and abandoned many of its noblest and highest ideals when it discarded its distinctive sartorial bearing. I, sir, retain our ancient mode of dress, and I trust also the ancient traditions of our profession. I deign to do this, sir, as a protest against the inroads that have been made, in modern times, upon the great principles of a noble profession."

They were indeed a friendly trio, and Mr. Thompson's natural wit and bonhomie were never exhibited to better advantage than when he was with these two young men. Arriving at Boston, they literally took the town by storm, as Mr. Silas Thompson expressed it, and he, being well acquainted with all the points of historical and local interest of that city, piloted and guided Mr. Streetfield around.

We have anticipated somewhat, and will have to retrace our steps to the hour when Mr. Streetfield

said good-bye to his hospitable hosts and their friend. We have to recount how hearty were the handshakings, and how genuine the expressions of regret, and how sincere were the many good wishes and the many hopes expressed for their meeting again in the near future.

Angus MacKenneth and Mary were there to say good-bye. Mary had come to regard Mr. Streetfield as if he were, indeed, one of the family. She sincerely regretted his departure. Miss Grace Wilcox felt very much the same way, and dear little Miss Emily Lawrence, she was genuinely affected, too.

It was really an implied compliment to Streetfield's many admirable qualities of mind and character that he should have engendered in so short a time, and in so many of those he had come in contact with in Great Hope, such genuine feelings of regret. Nor did he omit to remember that Africo-American, who had looked after the horse he used to ride and drive around so much. He, too, received a hearty shake of the hand and a very liberal largess. It may be remarked in passing that although the whites of the southern states resent bitterly any attempt or claim toward social equality, on the part of the blacks, yet they are not at all stand-offish, or snobbish in their relationship to the black population. As a matter of fact, a colored servant often takes liberties of speech with his white employer along certain lines. The black servant often admonishes and advises his white employer and even laughs heartily at any of his master's mistakes. The blacks are by no means servile or cringing in their attitude when addressing the whites. Rather are they suave and

mild-mannered, overflowing with an abundance of good humor. Their usually free and easy method of speech is not altered when addressing their white masters and they are as happy-go-lucky and as care-free when addressing the whites as when addressing one another.

The whites, on the other hand, to do them justice, do not exact or expect a servile attitude on the part of the blacks. All they demand is a respectful and good natured attitude. It matters but little to a white employer what his dark employee says, if only he will say it in a respectful and good natured way, other things being equal. Thus it comes about that an amazing amount of freedom and latitude of speech is indulged in between the whites and blacks, which to Mr. Streetfield, at times, seemed undignified, but he did not suffcient-ly appreciate the fact that both the whites and the blacks were born and reared under the same political conditions, and environments, and that naturally, a bond of intimacy was bound to grow up between the two races, a sort of human kinship between those whose interests touch at so many points, although social affiliations will always be denied the black population by the whites.

It was interesting, Reginald thought, to speculate as to what may be the ultimate outcome of these apparently paradoxical racial and social conditions. Perhaps the blacks are destined to absorb the whites after centuries of struggle, or perhaps the black races may die out in course of time, of this up to the present there is not the slightest evidence. Rather, to the contrary, they are increasing very rapidly. "But suffcient," he said to himself, "unto the day are the evils there-

of, and that Dame Nature," he communed, "has her own way of adjusting her own incongruities and contradictions." These were some of the reflections of Mr. Streetfield as he journeyed homeward from the Southland.

After an interesting and enjoyable stay of a few days in Boston, Mr. Streetfield bade his good friends a hearty farewell, and sailed for home.

CHAPTER III

A STATELY HOME IN ENGLAND

Sir William Streetfield, baronet, the father of Reginald, was about forty-six years of age when our story opened, but he looked older than this. His early manhood had been one of sorrow and suffering which accounted for his appearing older than he really was. Sir William had married early in life, when he was barely twenty-four. He married a beautiful and charming girl, the daughter of a neighboring squire, a Miss Alice Darnell, who died giving birth to the hero of our story, Reginald.

Sir William was inconsolable over the death of his wife. Leaving his little son Reginald when he was about two years old, in the care of a widowed sister, who was to supervise Streetfield Manor during his absence, he left on an extended exploring expedition into the heart of Africa. For over two years he wandered over the inhospitable regions of Central Africa. When at length he returned home, it was clearly obvious to those who had known him, that he was but a shadow of his former self. The terrible experiences and hardships attendant upon his delving into the jungles of Central Africa had left their mark upon him. Further than this, he had become infected with a pernicious form of malaria, so prevalent in those regions. Sir William was conveyed in an almost moribund condition to the hospital at Mombasa and under the skillful treatment and unremitting care of the English Army Surgeon in charge of the hospital there, he was gradually nursed back to life, and when sufficiently recovered, was peremptorily ordered back to England by his medical attendant.

For months after returning to England Sir William was under the constant care of a physician, and finally regained his vigor, although he still remained subject to sudden relapses of his dreaded malady. The ultimely death of Lady Streetfield and his own illness caused a melancholy strain to develop in the otherwise sunny and cheerful disposition of Sir William Streetfield. He gradually withdrew more and more within himself, and his whole life now seemed to be wrapped up in that of his son Reginald, who at this time was about five years old.

Sir William would, on occasions, remain seated for quite a long time in his large and comfortable leather chair and watch the lively romping of his boy. The boy, on his part, was strongly drawn to his father. To have occasioned even a reproachful look from his father would bring tears into the eyes of the little fellow, and it was only by the earnest reassurance of his father that the boy's grief could be assuaged.

As Reginald approached the age of five, the problem of providing him with a governess became pressing, and engaged the serious consideration of Sir William, who decided upon consulting his old and greatly esteemed friend and his near-neighbor, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Sharpe, the rector of the parish.

The Streetfield Manor and demesnes lay adjacent to the river Severn. From the gateway which lay to the south of the grounds was a roadway, leading northward, and lined on either side with stately and beautiful elms. As this picturesque road approached the Manor, it turned sharply to the west, to reach that building. Between this beautiful

avenue of elms, as it ran north, and the Manor House, which stood fully two hundred yards to the west, lay a wide stretch of lawn, broken here and there by clusters of ornamental shrubbery and lordly oak. Further north and well west again, were the stables and out-buildings, separated from the Manor House by another beautiful lawn intersected by a graveled road. Toward the south and west of the Manor spread the great Streetfield estates; stretches of timber alternating with rich pasture and farm lands could be seen extending away in the distance.

Upon these rich pasture lands hundreds of cattle peacefully cropped the verdant and succulent grass. The Streetfield Estate was famed for its rich pasture lands and the lords of the Manor for many years held the reputation of producing as fine a stock of cattle as could be seen anywhere in England. The present occupant was not any the less of an enthusiast in this enterprise than any of his predecessors, and Sir William devoted a great deal of his money and energy in keeping up the reputation of the Streetfield breed of cattle.

The Streetfield Manor was built in Elizabethan style. At each corner stood a turreted tower, and trailing roses of both the red and yellow varieties crept over these towers, completely covering the walls of the ancient structure. In June, when the roses were in bloom the beauty of the Manor House was entrancing beyond description.

The Streetfield estates comprised several thousand acres, with a yearly rent roll of twelve thousand pounds.

No landlords were ever more respected and revered by their peasantry than were the lords of

Streetfield Manor. On the other hand this devotion and respect was merited, for no landlords were ever more solicitous of the welfare of their tenants than were the Streetfields as far back as the memory of the oldest tenant could carry. Many tales were extant as to the numerous acts of spontaneous generosity shown to the tenantry by the masters of Streetfield.

To his tenants the untimely death of Lady Streetfield was a matter of sincere regret, and they sorrowed with the master, as he was generally called. Prayers and good wishes had followed him all throughout his long absence in Africa. On his return there was a sincere demonstration of pleasure and Sir William found his time taken up with the many duties incumbent upon the supervision of his estates.

Little Reginald aroused a good deal of interest among the tenants. The sadness of his advent lent additional interest to his being. It behooved Sir William to see that his son was not overindulged by these kind-hearted and sympathetic people. Reginald had reached the age of five years, and the grave consideration of securing a governess for him presented itself.

Hitherto, the sister of Sir William had supervised his household and the early care of the boy; but she, kind soul that she was, had since Sir William's return, taken suddenly ill and died, leaving the care of the child and household to a Miss Crawford, the housekeeper, a most estimable woman in her way.

Sir William was conscious of the great importance it was to a young mind to have nothing but the highest influences brought to bear upon it. The

tender and the supple limb is so easily bent and so greatly twisted and distorted by early malign influences. This disfigurement is almost certain to be retained in maturer years. Sir William determined to use caution and judgment in the choice of a governess for his boy. He therefore, consulted the Reverend Dr. Thomas Sharpe in the matter, as mentioned before.

One fine morning he strolled over to the rectory, which was within easy walking distance of the Manor. The rectory was one of those quaint commodious old fashioned buildings so frequently seen in England. The truth of that common saying, current since the reformation, "parsons and large families," must have impressed itself upon the builders of these parsonages scattered all over England, for they are for the most part commodiously built.

Dr. Sharpe was at home and in his roomy library. The walls of this room were lined with bookcases filled to their utmost capacity. The rector was a small man. His face was clean-shaven, with rather a large nose and wide kindly and inquiring eyes. He arose from his seat at the announcement of Sir William's arrival, and cordially greeted him.

Sir William had always entertained a very high appreciation of the rector's erudition, and sound judgment. They had long been warm friends, and had spent in the past many an evening hour together. They had often talked over Reginald's future. Sir William wished to enlist the good services of the rector in procuring a suitable instrucress for his boy.

In stating his wishes to the parson, he said, "I

do not want a *bas bleu*, as the French say, or a blue stocking, as we say it here, but a good wholesome well-bred English girl. I shall be more than liberal with her salary and I would prefer someone from a family to whom a liberal salary would be of material benefit and help. I want one whose character is such that it would influence for good the tender mind of my boy."

"I see. I see what you need, Sir William and as the Latins used to say, *'longum iter est per precepta, breve et efficax per exempla!'* which when translated means, 'Long is the way through precept, short and effective through example,' and I believe that I have the one you desire for your son. Read this letter, Sir William. I received it only this morning, from the wife of an old college chum of mine. A most extraordinary coincidence. Poor Brosby! you remember meeting him here a few years ago. He was at Oxford with me. He entered the Missionary Field in India, married, had a large family, and died quite unexpectedly from an attack of sunstroke. His widow has come home with her brood of four girls and three boys. She has written to me to ask if I could procure something for one of the girls, something after the nature of your requirements. Dear Brosby. He was a pearl of the first water. I met his wife when he was home on leave some years ago. She is a woman of estimable character. I had such a heartbroken letter from her in India telling me of the death of my old chum. Now she has written to find out whether I could procure employment for her daughter Dora. Dora is nineteen and may fill, to great advantage, just such a posi-

tion you offer. Let me read the letter to you. You have no glasses.

Taking the letter from Sir William the good parson read aloud.

124 Bromely Road,
Bath, England.

Dear and Trusted Friend:

I am writing to you to ask of you a service. My daughter Dora, who is a highly educated and accomplished girl of nineteen, is desirous of obtaining a situation where the salary will be remunerative and the duties sufficiently arduous to warrant a good salary. A governess in a good family would, I think, suit Dora, better than anything I know of. Dora is blessed with a very sweet, patient disposition, and would, I am sure, be able to manage the most fractious child. Anything that you can do for me, in this direction, would help us materially at this time. I am sending you, under separate cover some of my dear Jack's last literary compositions. He has written, as you know, some beautiful lines, and I think that these last, that I send you, rank well with his best. Should you at any time be near Bath, you must not omit paying us a visit.

With our united regards,

Sincerely yours,
Jane Brosby.

"I tell you what I will do, Sir William, I am due in London next week and I will take advantage of the opportunity to run into Bath and see the Brosbys. If you care to rely upon my judgment I will engage Dora on the terms you may name."

"I do not want to pay anything less than three

hundred and fifty pounds a year. This will be of some help to her."

"Sir William," rejoined the good parson, enthusiastically, "You are going to be, I verily believe, the good angel of this worthy family, but as the Latins say, *'Benigno Numine,'* that is to say, 'with a favoring providence,' I shall bring this young lady back with me. You will have to tell Mrs. Crawford, your housekeeper, to prepare for her reception some time next week.

"I want you to know, Sharpe, that I am not acting altogether in an unselfish way. Three hundred and fifty pounds, I admit, is a much larger sum than is usually paid for such services. Money with me is not an object, suitability and character are what I want. Here is an easy way that opens up quite unexpectedly."

"Sir William, you are so constantly doing these kindly acts and in so gracious a way, that you invariably make the recipient of your generosity feel that he or she is doing you the kindness by accepting your beneficence."

"Stay, stay, doctor. You are doing me too great an honor, ascribing to me virtues I do not possess. Providence has been gracious to me in the distribution of His gifts, and I want to use them to the best advantage of my fellow man."

"Would to God that there were many more like you, Streetfield. Our world would be a happier one if the responsibilities of wealth were better understood and more generally recognized. Come, the morning is fine, and as I see you are about to go, I will accompany you part of your way home. I shall be better able, for the little walk, to conclude my sermon for Sunday."

With this the two worthy gentlemen walked out together. They discoursed on many topics until the Manor gates were reached. Here Dr. Sharpe took his leave, and Sir William walked back thoughtfully toward the hall.

True to his promise, Dr. Sharpe called upon Mrs. Brosby at Bath, much to the delight of that estimable lady. He further evoked her gratitude when he laid before her the proposition of Sir William Streetfield. Dora, who was out on an errand when he called, returned at this moment, and was introduced to the doctor. The good parson was very favorably impressed with the striking appearance of the young lady. He rapidly made a mental note of her personal appearance and of her general demeanor.

Dora was a lovely girl of nineteen, in the heyday and joyousness of her youth. Her face inclined to be oval, her hair of the most gorgeous and shimmering golden brown, her complexion very clear and white, with a healthy glow of youth upon her cheeks. Her eyes, bright and laughing, were dark blue in color, almost approximating violet. Her nose and mouth were exquisitely formed, her face radiated the intelligence that one at a glance accorded her. She had a well-formed, full figure, and was dressed in a becoming suit of dark material which seemed to enhance the natural transparency of her complexion.

Dora heard the good news with unfeigned gladness, and impulsively threw her arms around her mother's neck and affectionately embraced her, saying, "How will you all ever get along without me, mother dear? May and Elizabeth and Charlotte and the boys. It seems almost impossible for

me to leave all of you. But I suppose it will have to be. I shall be frightfully homesick."

"You will have to be brave, Dora dear. It is for the best. We have talked this all over again and again, Dr. Sharpe, but dear Dora is quite overcome by the suddenness of her good fortune and at the prospect of separating from her brothers and sisters. Please convey to Sir William our appreciation of his more than generous offer."

"Just think, mama, of my earning three hundred and fifty pounds a year. Why, we can send the boys to school."

All this Dora said in so natural and unaffected a manner that the doctor was more than ever convinced of the wisdom of his choice. "I think," he said, "that is what Sir William had in mind when he named the salary, although he said nothing about that to me. Will you be able to accompany me tomorrow?"

"I am sure that I can get ready in that time, can I not, mama dear?" answered Dora enthusiastically.

It was arranged that Dora should accompany Dr. Sharpe next day.

This is how it came about, that Dora Brosby was introduced to Streetfield Manor. Mrs. Crawford, the housekeeper, had been apprised and well had she seen to the comfort of Dora. Of all the rooms that Dora had ever occupied, this room that was assigned to her was the coziest and the prettiest. It opened on a broad terrace and here were choice shrubberies nurtured and cared for with infinite pains. To the east in the distance the eye rested upon the silvery Severn, wending its sinuous way like a

long, shimmering serpent between the high banks that here and there, obscured the view. Towards the south she could see the timber and the pasture lands stretching away as far as the eye could reach.

Miss Brosby was introduced next day to Sir William, who seemed greatly pleased to meet her. He warmly shook hands with her, and desired her to regard this as her home, as long as she remained under his roof, and trusted that they would prove to be good friends, and that she would not find her duties too arduous or exacting, or her charge too refractory. All these sentiments and wishes Sir William uttered in his usual simple and unaffected manner, without the least assumption of authority or superiorty. The sweetly modulated voice of Dora, as she thanked him for his kind wishes, favorably impressed him. He then conducted her to the school or classroom, and here Dora met for the first time her future pupil.

The impulsive affection of the boy immediately removed any apprehension she might have entertained regarding her future influence over him. She was instinctively drawn towards the motherless boy. It was not long before Dora had arranged matters of study, of play, and of exercise. All this she did with so much good judgment, that Reginald insensibly passed into his new sphere of life. Whatever Dora did, she did with grace and tact. It was done without arousing any resentment or opposition from Reginald.

Dora wrote home regularly to her mother, and never failed to express her enthusiasm for her pupil and for her duties. She spoke also of the unfailing courtesy and consideration of Sir William towards her, and his appreciation of her efforts on

Reginald's behalf. Sir William had insisted that she should receive her quarterly allowance in advance, for he knew well the great help that would be towards starting Dora's brothers well on their way to school.

In the course of a few weeks, Dora had so settled down to her duties in her new environment that she began to be regarded as an established part of the household. Sir William would be absent for long periods of time; then again he would make a lengthy stay at home and Dora soon grew to look forward to his advent home. She was pleased to hear him express his satisfaction with the care she was taking of his son, and for the conscientious way she discharged her duties. Sir William readily recognized the great improvement already discernable in Reginald's general demeanor and conduct. He was a boy of high animal spirits, and it required a good deal of tact and firmness on the part of Dora to manage him at times without purposing to be in the least degree harsh.

Sir William, when at home, invariably insisted that Dora and his boy should be present at the noon-day meal, and on rare occasions, would ask them to be present at dinner. On such occasions, Reginald enjoyed a romp with his father, who always unbent himself for his boy. Sir William was conscious of the fact that boyhood days are but evanescent and that childhood would be soon over, and his boy, before he was aware of it, would outgrow his rompings and frolics. Hence, whenever practicable or feasible, he dropped everything to play and romp with his little son, or he would set aside his own reading to take his boy upon his knee to read to him. He argued with himself that

Reginald would soon be able to read fluently himself, and would not then need anybody to read to him. Boyhood was a very transitory period, he argued, and never again would the opportunity come to take his son on his knee and read to him. Thus a warm bond of sympathy and affection was being established between father and son, which grew stronger as Reginald grew older. To Dora Brosby this comradeship between Reginald and his sire was inexpressibly beautiful. She began to share with Reginald his respect and his veneration for Sir William.

Sometimes after the evening meal, Sir William would request Miss Brosby to read to him. She was a fluent reader, and read with a pleasing modulated voice. Sometimes he chose a fairy tale, so that Reginald could be interested. Then again it was some favorite poem of his, or perhaps it was one of the standard novels, which she would read through to him on succeeding evenings. At other times, he would ask Miss Brosby to sing and play, and as she had a sweet, clear and well-cultured voice, Sir William was always pleased when she did so. Miss Brosby, with her charge, retired from the drawing room as soon as ever her duties were completed.

As Dora became better known in the neighborhood, Sir William would thoughtfully arrange a little gathering of those neighbors, whom he considered would be congenial to her at dinner. Sir William insisted that the utmost courtesy be shown Miss Brosby by all who came under the roof of Streetfield Manor. On ordinary evenings Miss Brosby filled in the time in the company of the housekeeper, Miss Crawford, with sewing, or she

would read or write until bed time. Thus her days passed quietly and uneventfully. She was quite happy in her work and in her surroundings.

On several occasions her sisters came to visit her at the suggestion of Sir William. These were indeed happy days for the four girls. They would take Reginald with them and roam through the woods and over the pastures of Streetfield, making nosegays of wild flowers. Sir William, if happening to be at home, was more than usually gracious to the young people, thoughtfully planning everything that would give them pleasure. At one time it was an excursion here, and another time an excursion there. Then again it would be a ride through the country. The girls looked back with pleasant memories to their short holidays at Streetfield Manor. Miss Brosby was greatly interested in Sunday School and Church work and was ever willing to give her services and render any aid in that direction and the Reverend Dr. Sharpe was highly appreciative of all the kind and valuable services rendered the parish by Dora, and so were all the many earnest workers in his parish. As Miss Brosby became better known to the people of the county, it was only natural to predict that a young lady so beautiful and possessing so many talents, and such excellent qualities, would make some impression upon the youth of the neighborhood and such, indeed, did it prove to be.

There was a young gentleman by the name of Edward Oglesby, the son of a neighboring squire, who fell hopelessly in love with Miss Dora Brosby, and he sought her company on every possible occasion. He would call to see Sir William on the most flimsy pretexts, in the hope of meeting her.

Often he would volunteer to accompany her out riding. Miss Brosby was a good horsewoman, and frequently indulged in this form of exercise. Mr. Oglesby would volunteer to accompany her on visits she contemplated making in connection with her work in the parish. It soon became obvious to Miss Brosby, as well as to Sir William, and to several of her friends that Mr. Edward Oglesby's solicitude for her was prompted by feelings deeper than those of mere friendship, and comradeship. By the prompting, no doubt, of Mr. Oglesby, Miss Brosby was often invited by his mother and sister to social functions at the Oglesbys' home, and a warm feeling of friendship sprang up between Miss Dora Brosby and Edward's mother and sister, who were English ladies of the best and most excellent type.

Dora Brosby soon became a prime favorite among the county families, and also among the tenantry of the Streetfield estate. She was greatly admired for her amiability, her beauty, and her excellent qualities of mind and disposition.

Mr. Edward Oglesby's attentions became more and more noticeable, and Miss Dora hardly went anywhere that she did not meet him.

She looked upon him in the light of an agreeable, kind friend, and companion, but she could not disguise from herself the now too-plainly-to-be-seen, admiration of Mr. Edward Oglesby.

A few months after she had met him, they were walking together through the extensive orchard that the Manor was justly proud of, and when they had reached a secluded spot, Edward, taking advantage of the favorable opportunity, disclosed his feelings to Dora. Dora, although she

was not altogether surprised at this declaration of Mr. Oglesby, and which she had instinctively felt for sometime was inevitable, still she was at considerable loss to know how to proceed, or how to act, or what to say. The usual intuition of a woman came to her rescue, and she was able to give Mr. Oglesby a proper appreciation of her own feelings towards him; and he was told that while she was not unappreciative of the great honor he was doing her by asking her to be his wife, still, at the same time, she was convinced he would shrink from marrying any woman of whose love and affection he was not assured; that she had a great regard for him as a friend and a comrade, and trusted that they would remain so. On his further urging his suit, Dora told him without any affectation, or reserve, that she was sure that she could never come to regard him in any other light than that of a warm and dear friend, and that she would long hesitate before she consented to do any man so great an injustice as to marry him, when she felt quite conscious and quite convinced that she could never under any circumstances regard him with that deep and hallowed affection which a woman ought to possess for the man upon whom she purposed bestowing her hand.

Mr. Edward Oglesby was a man of high principle and was too chivalrous to further press his suit when he was so clearly given to understand the real feelings that Dora held towards him, and he took his refusal in good part, begging her not to let this declaration in any way affect their usual intimacy and comradeship, to which request Dora most gladly and graciously assented.

Sir William Streetfield had for some time past

been cognizant of young Oglesby's attentions to Miss Brosby and had watched the deportment of the young people with a good deal of interest, if not anxiety, which he found hard to explain. He had seen them walking in the orchard, and he was conscious that his own heart-beats were so unusually accelerated that he was constrained to confess to himself that he too had insensibly become fond of Dora. He remembered too, with pleasure, that while Miss Brosby was frank and free in her comradeship with young Oglesby, there was nothing to be observed in her behavior that could in the least way be construed into coquettish or frivolous conduct.

Sir William was startled when he awoke to the fact that he had actually become attached to the governess of his boy.

After watching Dora and Oglesby disappear into the orchard, he turned his footsteps into the library and there he sat and pondered deeply. He took himself to task. His conduct and bearing towards Dora at all times had been most scrupulously correct, honorable and proper, and she on her part, had never given him any reason whatsoever to think that any attention of his towards her would be acceptable.

Sir William Streetfield could not find a single reason for his being drawn towards Dora, except that she was Dora Brosby, and nobody else. He felt, however, that now this discovery was purposeless. Doubtless young Oglesby had, already, asked Dora to marry him, and she surely would not throw away so great an opportunity of making an excellent marriage. Nothing was plainer or more obvious to Sir William Streetfield than that. There

was no purpose in his worrying as to what his own feelings were towards Dora.

He arose and went to the window that overlooked the orchard, with an air of expectancy upon his usually somewhat saddened countenance. He presently saw them come out of the orchard. Dora was leading, and Oglesby followed a few feet behind her, with an expression upon his face of distress and disappointment, which it would have been difficult to have misunderstood. Sir William drew away from the window. He did not wish to be seen by either of the young people. He heard Dora come in alone, and divined that Oglesby had left. His feelings strongly urged him to go to Dora and learn from her what had really happened, but he felt that he had no warrant for such presumption.

Sir William decided that he would think over the matter as to what course to pursue. That night he struggled with himself and his own feelings. He had to confess that he was more in love with Dora than he was at first willing to admit; and he gleaned some comfort from the hope, prompted no doubt by his wish, that Dora had rejected the suit of Mr. Oglesby. After a restless and sleepless night he arose betimes.

Sir William busied himself before the noon hour by riding over his estates and attending to matters needing his supervision, endeavoring, in this way to employ his thoughts. He had arrived at the decision, after mature thought, that the only honorable course for him to pursue would be to ascertain from Miss Brosby herself, any changed relationship that might have taken place between herself and Mr. Oglesby.

Having decided upon this course of action, after the mid-day meal, he requested Miss Brosby's presence in the library. Nor did Dora regard this request as anything unusual, as she had at various times conferences with Sir William over certain methods of procedure that she had adopted from time to time in her instruction of Reginald.

"Pray be seated, Miss Brosby," said Sir William, as she entered the library.

For the first time Miss Brosby experienced a sort of ill-defined apprehension and fear. She immediately decided in her own mind that she was perhaps unduly nervous after her unpleasant meeting and distressing ordeal with Mr. Oglesby the day before.

"I have asked you here," began Sir William, "In order to clear up a situation which concerns yourself primarily. In doing so I am desirous of avoiding anything that might appear to you an intrusion upon your private affairs and your feelings. I am going to ask you a very direct question, Miss Brosby. I want to know, for reasons that I might explain later, whether there has grown up between you and Mr. Oglesby an attachment and if so, whether it has led to an understanding between you. Mr. Oglesby is a man I know to be of the most honorable instincts. I do not desire in any way to impugn his motives. To be concise, I want to know whether he has asked you to marry him."

The directness of Sir William's question embarrassed Dora considerably, and caused her to blush deeply. She could hardly refrain from tears, but made, however, a great effort to keep them back, as she did not care to have Sir William misjudge

her. She finally asked by way of reply:

"Why do you ask me that, Sir William Streetfield?"

"My dear child," rejoined Sir William kindly, "I am not asking you this from any idle curiosity. It has a direct bearing upon yourself."

Dora was still further perplexed by this enigmatical reference to herself. She was at a loss to express herself, but managed to say, "If you insist on knowing what has taken place between Mr. Oglesby and myself, owing to your position as master of this household and to that extent a guardian of mine, I am willing to tell you what happened yesterday morning, Sir William Streetfield—Mr. Oglesby asked me to be his wife and I rufused him."

"Why did you refuse him? He is an excellent young man, very wealthy; he comes from an old county family, and is the heir to its estates. A most desirable young man in every way."

"Because, Sir William, I do not care for him sufficiently well to consider any such relationship."

"Do you not think it unwise to throw away such an excellent offer, an offer that would mean so much to you all, Miss Brosby? Did you not consider what a great help it would be to your family?"

"Please do not press me any further, Sir William. I really cannot marry a man I do not care for, nor do I think that mama would wish me to make such a sacrifice of myself. You are not displeased with me for refusing him under these circumstances, are you, Sir William?"

"No, no, my dear girl. I am not displeased at all; and to tell you the truth, on the contrary, I am glad to hear of your decision. I was inclined

to believe when Mr. Oglesby paid you so much attention that you were favorably disposed towards him. More especially, as he is a man of such excellent qualities. It would have been what society would call a brilliant match for you; but now that I know you have declined the offer of his hand, I am free to say what I am going to, Dora!" He had never called her that before, and it startled her a little; but she had by this time completely recovered her composure. "Dora, you will forgive me calling you by that name, Miss Brosby, perhaps I ought to say. Come nearer me, my child, and give me your hand."

Dora approached him and timidly placed her hand in his. Perhaps she had some intuition or self-consciousness of what was coming, and she said with the utmost ingenuousness, "You may call me Dora if you prefer it, Sir William."

"But I do not wish to do so unless you give me the right to, Miss Brosby. May I be plain with you, Dora? I find, dear, that I have come to regard you very dearly. That being the case, had you accepted Mr. Oglesby, there would have been an end to any hopes that I might have entertained regarding you. Having rejected Mr. Oglesby, I must tell you, Dora, how fond I have become of you, but I want you to be perfectly free to act in this matter just as it appeals to you. Now that I have made this confession, Dora, and should you feel bound to disregard it for the same reasons which dictated your actions towards Mr. Oglesby, there is no other alternative than that as an honorable man, I shall leave you here to look after Reginald and go abroad, coming home only at long intervals to see my boy."

"I cannot say that I quite comprehend you, Sir William," Dora said inquiringly.

"It is this, Dora, it is this. Under these altered circumstances it would be an injustice to you, for me to remain under the same roof as yourself. Do you not understand?"

"I think I comprehend you now, sir, but why should you leave? Why should it not be me?"

"No, no. I cannot have you leave. It would be an injustice to Reginald in the first instance, and it would be an injustice to you, because this was of my own initiative. Having spoken as I have done, it is I that must accept the onus and the responsibility," replied Sir William, decisively.

"Indeed, Sir William, I cannot consent to anything like that. I will leave, of course, but all this is so strange and sudden to me, that I fear that I cannot really properly comprehend it," retorted Dora in evident distress.

"Forgive me, Miss Brosby, for having caused you distress. I am in honor bound to protect your position in this house; and this is the only way left open, that I can see at present." Sir William appeared to be unconscious of the fact that Dora's hand had not been withdrawn, and that he was still holding it with a gentle though firm grasp. This had been altogether too much for Dora's equanimity and she gently withdrew her hand to procure her handkerchief to dry the tears which, in spite of herself, welled up into her eyes and moistened her cheeks. Having done this, she almost unconsciously replaced her hand in Sir William's and said, with the most charming naivete, "I will do whatever you think best, Sir William. I

have been very happy here, and would regret very much your going away.

"Is it possible that you care for me as much as all that. Would you really regret my absence, Dora?" earnestly rejoined Sir William, appreciating for the first time the significance of Dora's replacing her hand in his. "Now, dear, let me tell you, how much I do really care for you; but, Dora, you do really care for me, do you not?"

"I do now, Sir William, since you have asked me. I would not be standing here near you, with my hand in yours if I did not. I have always been greatly interested in you, Sir William, but I have never permitted any feeling of respect or esteem, that I may have had for you to proceed further than that. It is indeed a great surprise to me that you should care for me at all. I never dreamed it could have been possible. Had I allowed my feelings toward you to have blossomed and ripened into affection, I would have felt it my duty, to you and to myself, to have asked you to release me from my duties here. You believe me, do you not, Sir William, when I say that?" answered Dora with great earnestness.

"I not only believe you, but I know it could not have been otherwise with you, Dora. Come nearer to me. Let me tell you about myself. I realized for the first time, only yesterday, my feelings toward you when I saw you and Mr. Oglesby in the orchard. Once I realized that, there was only one honorable course to pursue. Should you have not rejected Mr. Oglesby's offer of marriage, or in other words, had you accepted him, it would have been entirely different. Is this the reason why

you refused Mr. Oglesby, Dora?" With this Sir Wililam affectionately placed his arm around Dora, and gently drawing her to himself, kissed her gently, almost reverentially.

"I refused him, Sir William, because I could not love him. I could not, and did not analyze my feelings towards you at that time, but I may have subconsciously held you as the type of man that my heart would go out to, but I instinctively felt that I could never love Mr. Oglesby. This may be owing, dear, to my unconsciously loving you without permitting myself even for one moment to entertain such a remote possibility," replied Dora in a sweet confiding voice.

There we shall leave these happy lovers. Sufficient to say that it was arranged that Dora should go home to her mother that very day with Sir William. He was to ask Mrs. Brosby for the hand of her daughter. There was naturally a great commotion and excitement in the Brosby home, especially among the girls, when they learned that Dora was to be married to a baronet. Mrs. Brosby was entirely overcome at the announcement and could only repeat, "I always said, Sir William Streetfield, that Dora was deserving of the best in the land, and I am sure she is really getting only what she deserves. She has always been such a noble girl, that the man is lucky, indeed, who gets her for a wife."

It was decided that there being no cause for undue delay, it was left to Dora to set the day for the marriage, which she did, a month from that date. Reginald was to have a holiday during that time. Dora had stipulated that she should be permitted to go on with the care and instruction of

her charge, to whom she had become most warmly attached. We are ready to admit that the selection of Dora's trousseau was a matter of most poignant concern, and every possibility was thoroughly threshed out before a suitable selection was finally made by Mrs. Brosby and the girls.

So Dora was married to Sir William Streetfield quietly, without any undue demonstration, at her mother's church by the local rector, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Sharpe. The boys were, of course, recalled from the school, and how they did torment poor Dora, addressing her with My Lady this, and My Lady that, but Dora was well used to her brothers' teasing, and took it all good-naturedly, although she felt embarrassed at times, especially so, when Sir William happened to be present, but really so genuinely good natured was the chaff with which they tormented their sister that at times Sir William himself was highly amused, although sympathizing with the obvious and excusable embarrassment of Dora, but she too, would join in Sir William's merriment at the jibes of the youngsters. At times he would bribe them with a five pound note not to tease Dora. This he always found effective, and, to give the boys credit, they generally stood fairly by their contract.

We will not descant on the loveliness of Dora, in her bridal robe, of pale pink satin of the most delicate hue, set off to great advantage with a magnificent tiara of diamonds that Sir William presented to her on her wedding day. He, with his usual kind and thoughtful consideration and delicacy of feeling, made a prenuptial settlement upon Dora, sufficient, he said, to enable her to

place her brothers properly in the world, and to provide amply for the needs of her sisters and of her mother. Nor should we forget to mention the charm of Dora's three sisters, who were her bridesmaids. They looked like so many beautiful and chaste petals that surrounded and clustered about, as it were, a flower that was just beginning to unfold. Sir William looked noble with his thoughtful, kind face with all its melancholy dissipated and supplanted by an expression of rapture and joy. Little Reginald was there: Dora saw to that. The youngster was all happiness and expectation. His father told him that he was going to have a mama. He could not now be long drawn away from Dora. And Dora's inquiring eyes would ever and anon meet Reginald's. A look of perfect understanding would pass between them, and he would run to Dora and kiss her, and say to her, "You are my mama now. I am so glad, for I wanted a mama for such a long time, and I asked Santa Claus to send me a mama last Christmas, and he forgot. I am glad that he forgot because you are my mama now, I know you are. If Santa Claus sent me a mama last Christmas, I would have two mamas now. Papa says, that I cannot have two mamas." Thus did this dear youngster prattle, to the infinite delight of all who heard him. Dora was now drawn to him by a nearer and a stronger tie. She silently and fervently prayed that she might long be spared to do the full measure of her duty to this motherless boy, who had taken her into his heart.

What a happy family this! And well may we too pray, that the sum of human happiness accorded them, would not diminish as the years rolled

by, but rather that it would be added to, if that were possible.

The wedding breakfast over, Sir William and Lady Streetfield rolled away in their carriage to the station. They were bound for London en route to the continent. They expected to stay away for two or three months, before returning to Streetfield Manor. Little Reginald was left in the good care of Mrs. Brosby, and well satisfied was he to be with her, for that good lady had already won his confidence and affection.

Several years had now passed since that marriage scene at Bath. Sir William and Lady Streetfield had passed the intervening years in unalloyed bliss, although no issue had blessed their union. They had become reconciled to the disappointment. Lady Streetfield herself had always been a mother to Reginald, who was indeed, in every way a son to her, and his affection for Dora was almost divine. To Reginald she was the only mother he had ever known, and to Lady Streetfield, he was the only child that she had ever been mother to. They were drawn to each other with a natural instinct. Dora undertook the entire supervision of Reginald and instructed him as in the days of yore, when she was a governess in the household.

In regard to Mr. Oglesby, he found it hard to reconcile himself to his disappointment, and he secured an under-secretaryship in the diplomatic service, and had been away ever since, excepting for short visits at long intervals to his mother and sister. At these times he never missed calling upon Sir William and Lady Streetfield. He was glad, good fellow as he was, to witness the happiness of Dora.

Sir William Streetfield, who always entertained a high regard for Edward Oglesby, was glad to see him and he said to him once, "Your loss, Oglesby, was very great, and in proportion my gain, but I played the game with you, did I not? You had a fair field and no favors."

Mr. Oglesby had, by this time, quite got over his disappointment and was able to enter into the spirit of Sir William's good natured banter.

Young Reginald, in addition to what was being taught him by his mother, was taking lessons three days a week from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe in Latin and Greek. Reginald was now getting old enough to have a tutor, preparatory to sending him to school. A young gentleman of the name of Thistlewaite was engaged to undertake the further instruction of the boy. For the next two years Reginald passed under his care. This young man was one who had a high regard for principle and duty and Reginald received the full meed of his perseverance and pains, so much so, that now he had arrived at the age of fourteen, Sir William and Lady Streetfield decided upon sending him to Harrow.

The parting was a great trial to all of them and the boy fairly broke down when he was saying good-bye to his mother, (for by that appellation he always addressed Lady Streetfield) and she on her part had to use all her self-restraint and all her self-possession to prevent herself doing likewise. Oh how those first days dragged at Streetfield Manor. The void created in the daily routine of the household seemed at first impossible to fill, and many were the secret tears shed by Lady Streetfield as she thought of the gallant little fel-

low who had for so many years filled so large a place in her life.

Then came the holidays. The happy days of his first return home. Lady Streetfield had counted the months, then the weeks, then the days, then the hours as his advent home drew nearer and nearer, and then at last came Reginald, with the bloom of early adolescence breaking upon him. His wonderful progress at school under the stimulus of emulation was a delightful surprise to Sir William and herself. As each succeeding holiday term came around, they could not but notice the comely development that was insensibly taking place in their boy, and Lady Streetfield rejoiced to see that the precepts that she had so sedulously and early instilled into the boy were now bearing good fruit, for he had grown up into a chaste, manly, honorable and athletic young man.

Reginald had passed through all his classes with credit to himself and to his masters, and the time was soon approaching when he was to enter upon a college life, and his father chose Oxfor for him.

As Reginald had several months now to wait before entering Oxford and joining his classes, his parents decided upon taking him on a tour of continental Europe. These were some of the happiest days in the happy life of Lady Streetfield. She was almost inordinately proud of her handsome son, nor did Reginald fail to make use of every opportunity that afforded itself for instruction and observation.

At Oxford Reginald stayed three years. Here it was that the foundation of his friendship with George Wilcox from Great Hope, Tennessee, was laid, and Reginald, with the consent of his parents,

had invited the young American to Streetfield during a recess.

This young American had many qualities that appealed strongly to those with whom he became acquainted. He was kind, considerate, obliging, good natured, and free from any affectation and with an exceedingly fine address. An unusual young man in every way, and one who made many friends among his fellow students at Oxford. Sir William and Lady Streetfield warmly welcomed George Wilcox, and he was made to feel thoroughly at home at Streetfield Manor by his host and charming hostess. Mr. George Wilcox spent several of his vacations at Streetfield Manor. He came to regard Streetfield Manor as his second home, and thus did this friendship between these two young men become more and more cemented.

In regard to Mrs. Brosby, she and her three unmarried daughters, had gone out to India to her son who had passed into the Indian Civil Service. Two of her daughters had married young British Officers shortly after going out, and the third remained with her at the home of her son.

Thomas Brosby, the second eldest brother of Lady Streetfield, had passed through the royal military school at Sandhurst and had secured a commission in the army, his regiment was now stationed in England. He paid many visits to his sister, Lady Streetfield. Lieut. Brosby was an enthusiast in his profession and he had watched the development of Reginald with great pride and interest. Reginald, as a boy, had an unbounded admiration for his foster uncle, Tom Brosby. But since his Uncle Tom had donned her majesty's uniform, it is not surprising that the young lieuten-

ant had instilled some of his enthusiasm for a soldier's life into the ardent spirit of young Streetfield, and that Reginald had decided to adopt the army as his career in life. Lady Streetfield's brothers and sisters often visited her when they were in England and were always made exceedingly welcome by Sir William and their sister. Of the brothers the oldest had passed the examination for the Indian Civil Service, and had been appointed to an assistant collectorship in Bengal. The second son, Thomas, or "Tom" as he was generally called, as we have just stated had joined the army, and was now a lieutenant in her majesty's 110th foot regiment. The third had followed his father's footsteps and had entered the mission field in Travancore, Southern India. Mrs. Brosby had elected to accompany her son in the civil service to India at his urgent solicitation.

Reginald's parents acquiesced in his desire to enter the Royal military school at Sandhurst, but before doing so, Reginald found that he had several months at his disposal, and, as Mr. George Wilcox was about to return home to Great Hope, Tennessee, he prevailed upon young Streetfield to accompany him.

Hitherto Reginald's life had run the usual tenor of such ways. He had, of course, to pass through all the perturbations and vexations experienced by all young men passing through their school and college days, but the equipoise he acquired in early life, through the sedulous care of his parents and tutors, stood him in good stead in those days and he had safely weathered all the trials and temptations that beset the youth of his own age. He was now a young man with complete command over

himself. By no means a self-conscious prig, but simply a manly, highly educated, well bred English boy with the usual English contempt for anything underhanded, hypocritical or not absolutely above board. He believed, like most young men of his own rank, and of his own station in life, in playing the game of life fairly and squarely; he was open-minded, generous, and unsuspecting. He was passionately attached to his mother, who for that matter might just as well have been his own mother, in so far as their reciprocal affections went. This, and his profound reverence and respect for his father, was the key-stone of young Reginald's life. Naturally of a daring, chivalrous disposition, he was saved many of the temptations that beset and wreck the careers of less fortunate youths. As for Lieutenant Tom Brosby, who was about nine years Reginald's senior, he was exceedingly delighted to learn of Reginald's choice of the army. Lieut. Tom was hearty, bluff and good-natured, although on the parade-ground, or when on duty, he was regarded as a strict disciplinarian. His hearty laughter was particularly infectious. He was proud of his regiment, and Lieutenant Brosby appeared at his best, as his handsome face and figure was seen marching by the side of his company. Lieutenant Brosby had met George Wilcox, the young American, several times at his sister's, and they had become cordially acquainted.

"Sir William," Lieutenant Brosby remarked on more than one occasion to him, "I told you years ago that I was going to make a soldier of your son. Did I not, sir? Here's to her majesty's service, and here's to the success of Lieutenant

Reginald Streetfield." "Come Brosby," George Wilcox rejoined, being present and having heard the remark of Lieutenant Brosby. "It does not require a prophet or the son of a prophet to foretell that. There is the Church, and there is the Bar, the Navy, the Army, and we all knew in what direction the inclination of Reginald veered, but you must not forget that I am going to take Reginald home with me, and perhaps he might marry an American girl and may elect to become an American citizen, and take to planting tobacco in Tennessee."

"None of that, none of that, Wilcox," retorted Brosby. "Young Reginald now belongs to her most gracious Majesty's service. God bless her."

"I shall not be gone for long, mother," Reginald said to Lady Streetfield. "I expect to be back within four months, and then I shall have to work hard for my army entrance examinations. I am sure I am going to have a very interesting visit. I only regret that father and yourself are not to accompany me." "You know that your father cannot travel now, Reginald. He has been far from well lately, and I would not leave him. Mr. Wilcox has been insistent upon our accompanying you and being included in the invitation. But go, my son. We shall, of course, miss you. We will console ourselves in the knowledge that you are having an enjoyable and a most instructive visit."

At one time Lieutenant Brosby twitted Reginald about meeting some fascinating American girl ("they abound in the States," he said) and bringing home a yankee bride.

"There is considerable danger of that, I assure you, Lady Streetfield," said George, "but I will see

to it that he has a wide choice of partners, and you may rely upon my infallibility."

"No, no Wilcox," Reginald responded humorously. "I am going to be wedded to my profession; and besides, my mother is the only woman I am in love with, and I am going to remain faithful to her. Am I not, mother?"

"My dear boy, I am sure you will," replied Lady Streetfield, her eyes filling with tears at this expression of affection from her son. Seeing this Reginald affectionately kissed her.

This was the one woman who had indeed been more than a mother to him, the one that had taken such infinite trouble and pains with him all through his tender years, and now that he had arrived at man's estate, he was profoundly grateful, and strongly attached to her.

"Yes, Reginald dear, you are truly a son to me, the only son I have ever known. Your happiness will always be my own. Kiss me again, you dear good boy."

Thus did Reginald leave England for a short stay in America. His arrival there and the incidents of his sojourn have already been related.

CHAPTER IV.

A BONAPARTIST EXILE

An old and respected Huguenot family were the Dieulafois. Madame Dieulafoi was a really remarkable woman. She was all the more remarkable because she was married to a remarkable man. Many another woman, had she been married to Monsieur Dieulafoi, would have long ago given up the struggle and died, or would have sunk into a state of docile indifference. But not so with Madame Dieulafoi. She avoided all controversies with her husband, and with that subtle tact so characteristic of French women, she would often bring her husband back into a right frame of mind. She readily concurred in his opinions, and did not attempt to oppose him in any of his vagaries, of which, indeed, there were many. It so happened that Madame Dieulafoi and her husband were of one mind, and whatever appealed to him, no matter how fanciful and fantastic, interested her likewise.

No human pair could have been more alike in tastes, ideas, mental disposition, and habits than were these two.

Monsieur Dieulafoi was a man apart. He was a man of himself, and by himself.

Monsieur Dieulafoi prided himself upon his close resemblance to the celebrated Marshall Ney. His counterpart existed, notwithstanding that claim, only in his life partner, Madame Dieulafoi. She almost anticipated his thoughts, and certainly his actions. These two had scarcely ever been separated in life. Monsieur was five years her senior. The coalescing and the cementing of these

two lives began at school. Little Marie Mortier, a grand-daughter of General Mortier, one of the great Napoleon's famous generals, had first attracted the notice of the school boy, Edmund Dieulafoi, by shouting out in her shrill, childish voice, *Vive l'empereur!* Here, indeed, were the magical words that brought these two souls together.

The strong ties of mutual traditions and affiliations cemented their youthful friendship, which in after years ripened into marriage.

In all their early manhood and womanhood, and all through their checkered married life, this sentiment, that they so religiously regarded, had acted like a powerful magnet in drawing their lives still closer together.

Monsieur Edmund Dieulafoi was the grandson of General Francis Dieulafoi, a general in the Grand Army of Napoleon the Great. General Francis Dieulafoi lost his life in the disastrous retreat from Moscow. His son again, who was a Lieutenant of the guard, was taken prisoner by the Russians in the same campaign, but was afterwards permitted to return to France at the restoration of the Bourbons, in 1814.

Lieutenant Dieulafoi recoiled against accepting service under the Bourbons, whom he looked upon as usurpers of the Imperial Throne of France. On Napoleon's escape from Elba, and return to France, Lieutenant Dieulafoi took service in his hastily mobilized legions. He was appointed Colonel of one of the Imperial Guard regiments, and fought with that regiment at the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon's banishment to the Island of St. Helena brought to a close, for the time being, the dream of the Bonapartists.

Colonel Dieulafoi retired from active service after the Restoration of the Bourbons, and lived in a quiet, unostentatious way at the little town of Antinil, not far from Paris, to dream over what might have been had Napoleon won the Battle of Waterloo.

Colonel Dieulafoi married a widow of one of Napoleon's officers, who perished at that decisive battle. This doughty Colonel had but one child by this marriage—a son, our Monsieur Edmund Dieulafoi.

Edmund was reared in all the ardent traditions of the family that lived only in the tragic story of that brilliant, although ephemeral dynasty. Young Edmund inherited all the enthusiasm and the almost idolatrous loyalty so apparent in his progenitors. The Napoleonic legend burned in his bosom with a fierce energy. The Bonapartists' cause had become an obsession with young Edmund Dieulafoi, so that when the Third Napoleon seized the reins of government, and proclaimed himself Emperor, upon a plebiscite, young Dieulafoi took service under him, and fought in the French armies at the battle of Solferino. At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he was a captain in a cavalry regiment, and fought all through that terrible and disastrous conflict. Although passing through many dangers, and having had many narrow escapes, he emerged from that conflict unscathed.

After the establishment of the Republic, Edmund, like his father before him, retired to his country estates and lived in seclusion. Edmund Dieulafoi had married in the year 1858 Marie Mortier, his little school-mate, who was wont to

shout so lustily in their school days for the first emperor.

To this union were born in the year 1860 twins, both girls, Veronica and Josephine. The girls were so much alike when babies that it was difficult even for the parents to distinguish between them. As they grew up they continued to resemble each other more markedly, if that were at all possible.

Shortly after the establishment of the French Republic, the Emperor Napoleon III sought refuge in England, residing at Farmborough, not far from London, until his death in 1873. About the time when Veronica and Josephine were in their twelfth year, Captain Edmund Dieulafoi was threatened with arrest on a fictitious charge of conspiracy against the government. Despising the republic as he did, he did not purpose giving the government an opportunity of proscribing him, and sequestrating his estates. Getting as much money together as he could, by selling as much of the lands of his inherited estates as possible, Edmund Dieulafoi left for England with a fair competency. With his wife and daughters, he took up his residence in London, to be near his beloved emperor, as he said. The French government, finding that he had voluntarily exiled himself, sequestrated such portions of his estates as had not been sold, which were indeed a considerable part of them. Captain Dieulafoi had saved enough, however, from the wreck of his fortunes to maintain himself and his family in a moderately comfortable manner in England.

Into their children, Veronica and Josephine, the parents instilled and fostered all the glorious tra-

ditions of the Bonapartists. They were taught to execrate the very name of the Republic, nor would Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi associate in the least way with any of their countrymen and women in London who favored the present regime in France, or who were in any way tinctured with republicanism.

The greatest joy in the lives of the exiled pair was to take an occasional excursion to Farmborough, accompanied by their two beautiful children, and there to watch for a sight of their beloved emperor and empress. At intervals, the exiled emperor, Najoleon III, would summon his devoted adherent to present himself at Farmborough, with Madame Dieulafoi, and their two girls. The exiled emperor was cognizant of the great sacrifices that Monsieur Dieulafoi had made on behalf of his dynasty, and of the persecutions he had endured in France for his loyalty to himself. Captain Dieulafoi had chosen to be known, after his advent in England, as simply Monsieur Dieulafoi.

The Empress Eugenie greatly admired the beautiful Dieulafoi children. On one occasion she had placed a chain and locket containing her miniature around the neck of each of the little girls. This appealed to the delighted parents as the crowning joy of their lives. Monsieur Dieulafoi was even more bitter after that incident, if that were possible, against the usurpers in France, as he called the Republican government there.

Monsieur Dieulafoi's hatred of the republican regime became more and more an obsession with him. He would break out into an ungovernable rage when the mere name of the Republic was mentioned.

His obsession became known to his associates, and woe betide anybody who would mention the name *Republique Francaise* in his hearing.

Veronica and Josephine, in the meantime, grew to be two beautiful young women, thereby redeeming the promise of their childhood. They were so extraordinarily alike, that it was really difficult for a stranger to say who was Veronica and who was Josephine. Both were brunettes, and both were of the same height. Both were of the same figure, Veronica being, if anything, a little fuller in the chest, and a little heavier, but not to any appreciable degree. They had the most exquisitely shaped heads, with an abundance of dark brown, lustrous hair. Both had large, brown eyes, with long, dark eyelashes. Both had beautifully shaped noses and chins, and the most inviting of rosebud lips, which disclosed on smiling in each instance, rows of the most exquisitely white and perfectly formed teeth. The girls dressed alike in every particular and detail, and one was seldom seen without the other.

Their parents nurtured these two girls with all that care that gentle French parents take with their daughters. They spent every sovereign they could possibly scrape together on their education. Veronica, the first-born, was passionately fond of music. In the course of time she was enabled to appreciatively augment the family income by having pupils of her own. The girls were at this time about eighteen years old. It must not at all be imagined that their bringing up made of them prudish girls. On the contrary, they were girls with all that romanticism of youth which ardent natures often unconsciously display, and which

bubbled forth in evidence in every chaste and graceful movement of their magnificently human bodies. Josephine invariably accompanied her sister Veronica when she instructed pupils at their homes. There was one pupil of Veronica's, the daughter of a distinguished French *savant*, who had chosen London instead of Paris wherein to pursue his studies and researches. He was an ardent Bonapartist, too, but perhaps not so obsessed as Monsieur Dieulafoi. This young lady, whom Veronica instructed in music twice a week in her own home, was one of the most promising as well as one of the best paying of her pupils. On one of these occasions Veronica and her sister, Josephine, were introduced by this girl's father to a Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, a young gentleman attached to the French diplomatic legation in London.

Monsieur Alphonso Laudet was a young man with an unusually attractive appearance, and with all the insinuating manners of a modern French Beau Brummel. His bright and engaging manners and his seemingly ingenuous disposition, together with his other qualifications and personal gifts, make it easy to suppose that he would readily impress the heart of so romantic and so ardent a young lady as Veronica. Monsieur Laudet's natural gallantry and affability of manner, his facility of expression, and the infectious buoyancy of his laugh, all these did not fail to have their proper weight with our two young ladies, more especially with Josephine, who was in fact, far more impressionable and less worldly wise than Veronica. On the way home, Josephine felt free to confess to Veronica that should she be thrown much into the

company of Monsieur Laudet, there would be great danger of her falling a victim to his natural and charming manner and accomplishments.

In truth it was difficult for Veronica to chide her sister, for she herself had greatly admired the gallant and gifted Frenchman. But, be that as it may, it was Josephine's secret.

Veronica secretly rejoiced that at last there had come into the somberness of their lives something that promised a real romance.

On the other hand, the striking beauty, the natural charm and grace of Josephine, were by no means without effect upon the dashing young diplomat. After several informal meetings with Josephine, it was quite apparent that Monsieur Alphonse was in love with her and that Josephine was in love with him. He had taken the opportunity, when alone with Josephine, to express to her the depth of his feelings. The radiant lovers sought the aid of Veronica, as to the ways and means to be adopted to introduce the young gentleman to her parents. Veronica suggested that Monsieur Laudet should make a formal call upon them when their parents were usually to be found at home.

It was arranged that Monsieur Laudet was to call the following Wednesday afternoon. Monsieur Dieulafoi and his good wife were introduced to Laudet by Veronica, and they greeted him with all the courtesy and bonhomie so natural to the French people. They were indeed greatly charmed by the bearing, the appearance, and the affability of manner of Monsieur Laudet, and with their usual native hospitality invited the young gentleman to stay to dinner.

Veronica and Josephine had both taken the precaution to warn Monsieur Laudet that he was not, by any means, to intimate that he was connected with the diplomatic service of the French Republican Government, and he was further cautioned to avoid calling in question any of the animadversions that Monsieur Dieulafoi was bound to cast upon the present French government and Republicans in general. Thus cautioned, Monsieur Laudet steered a safe course, and apparently acquiesced in most of the extravagant and distorted, and in many cases unjust accusations of Monsieur Dieulafoi against the Republic and his equally extravagant *parler a tort et a travers* of the Bonapartists.

The evening passed away very pleasantly, notwithstanding the apprehensions of the young ladies as to the possibility of a *faux pas* on the part of Monsieur Laudet. In the event of that taking place, there would have been inevitably an explosion on the part of Monsieur Dieulafoi.

The girls sang and played, while Laudet, who had an excellent voice, accompanied them in many well-known French songs, much to the delight of Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi. Laudet, however, found an opportunity once or twice to plant a surreptitious kiss upon the lips of Josephine.

He at length departed, not without a solemn asseveration to Monsieur Dieulafoi that he would dine again with him at an early date. It can well be supposed that Josephine and Laudet took the opportunity to meet at various times and places, and that he soon become a frequent visitor at the home of the Dieulafois.

The attention of the parents was at length drawn towards Laudet and Josephine.

"Do you not think, Marie," said Monsieur Dieulafoi one day to his wife, "that Monsieur Laudet is paying our Josephine altogether too much attention?"

"Well, suppose he is, my Edmund. Surely our daughter is worthy of some good man's attention. I have truly observed it myself, and have secretly rejoiced. We must question our daughter. An honorable marriage it would make for her," replied Madame Dieulafoi.

"Do but call her and question her, Marie. I am going to the city this morning and you can interrogate her in my absence. Tell me how conditions are when I return." With these instructions, Monsieur Dieulafoi went out.

"Josephine! Josephine! Come here!" called Madame Dieulafoi after her husband's departure.

'I am here, mother. What do you want with me?" continued Josephine, self-consciously, as she appeared.

"Your father wants me to question you in regard to this young man Laudet," replied her mother.

"Monsieur Laudet?" exclaimed Josephine, assuming surprise. "What about Monsieur Laudet, mother?"

"Josephine, your father and I have noticed that this young man has become very attentive to you. You must be very careful in your behavior towards him and not give him any occasion to think you are a coquette."

"Really, mother, I believe father and yourself are altogether too anxious about Veronica and my-

self. What made you suppose he is attentive to me?" continued Josephine demurely.

"My dear child, we cannot belie our eyes. If the young man purposes to act honorably he will have to declare himself; your father is insistent on that."

"Mother, darling, I know that it was wrong to keep any secret from you and father. Monsieur Laudet has asked me to marry him and I have consented to do so. Mother, I was so afraid that father would not like it; so I kept the secret from both of you. Veronica was to tell you of it today, but I am glad that I have had to tell you myself. Oh, mother darling, I am so happy! I am greatly in love with Alphonso, and he simply adores me." Josephine implored in a most charmingly demure and appealing voice.

"Come here, my child. Come and nestle your head upon your mother's bosom. My poor, darling, Josephine. God grant that my child has not made a mistake. Do you realize, my child, that it is a very serious matter to promise to marry a young man, especially when you do not know whether or not he has the means to support a wife and to take care of her? Tell your mother, dear, how all this came about."

"I met him, mother, several times at the home of Monsieur Favard, when I accompanied Veronica," replied Josephine.

"Have you met him elsewhere than at the home of Monsieur Favard and your father's house?"

"Yes, mother dear, do not be angry with me. I want to tell you all about it. I have met Alphonso frequently in Hyde Park."

"You poor child. You have been very indiscreet. Your father must not hear about this. You must insist upon Monsieur asking your hand from your father before you speak of your engagement to him."

"Oh, you dear, kind, sweet mother. I do so love you! Kiss me, mother. I am so afraid!" said Josephine, as her mother warmly embraced her and gently caressed her and showered kisses upon her cheeks, neck and shoulders.

"You will always be your mother's girl, whatever happens, Josephine."

"You good, kind, darling mother," rejoined Josephine, impulsively, and with deep feeling, and taking her mother into her arms Josephine hugged her to herself.

"Later in the day Monsieur Dieulafoi asked his wife what Josephine had said when questioned as to Monsieur Laudet.

"Josephine remarked about his attentions," said his wife evasively. "Maybe he will ask her hand in marriage. Will you consent if Josephine cares for the young man?"

"Most certainly I will consent," replied Monsieur Dieulafoi emphatically. "That is, if the young man is desirable," he said in qualification of his remark. "Our daughters will be best off when suitably married. Besides, Marie, I want to see some of my grandchildren on my knee before I die."

Madame Dieulafoi lost no time in letting Josephine know the feelings of her father in the matter and how he apparently welcomed the information and that there now appeared no obstacles to their betrothal and marriage.

Thus it was arranged that Josephine was to

have Monsieur Laudet ask her hand from her father the next time he called at the house.

"Alphonso, you must be most careful with father. I would not have to tell you this had you witnessed one of his explosions. Once his animosity is aroused it is impossible to appease his anger," warned Josephine.

"Why, of course, my adored one. I will be guarded in what I say and do. As they say in France, *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute.* "It is only the first slip that costs," responded Laudet.

So it came about that the Monsieur Laudet paid his promised visit to Monsieur Dieulafoi and was closeted for a long time with that gentleman in his study. So long did he stay, that Madame Dieulafoi, Veronica, and Josephine, who were anxiously awaiting the result of the interview, were beginning to get apprehensive. They weli knew and had experienced the angry explosions of that irate gentleman. Nor were their fears without foundation. They soon began to hear the angry exclamations of Monsieur Dieulafoi and the rising voice of Monsieur Laudet in angry retort. The door opened and out of it emerged Monsieur Laudet, appearing much disturbed and perplexed. They heard Monsieur Dieulafoi say in a loud, emphatic voice, "I will never allow a daughter of mine to marry a miserable caitiff of a republican. Rather would I see her in her coffin. Begone, sir, and never again present yourself at my house, or ever attempt to claim acquaintance with my daughter."

Alas, poor Josephine! She knew full well that the waters had burst the dam, and she hastened to meet Monsieur Laudet, who appeared very much disconcerted and ruffled. Josephine, taking his

hand, gently drew him into the drawing room and said to him. "Poor Alphonso. It has proved to be what I most feared, but you go away now quietly, dear. I will meet you at our rendezvous at the usual time. We must wait until father quiets down. Mother, Veronica, and I will do our best to bring him back to a normal state of mind. Kiss me, Alphonso, and do not look so distressed. Do not be downhearted, dear. You know what the proverb says, 'faint heart never won fair lady.' Now kiss me, and go before father breaks out again," pleaded Josephine.

The irate father had heard their voices in conversation, and called out in a loud, angry tone. "Get away, Josephine! Get away from him. He is one of those miserable republicans. The impudence of a cur of a republican asking me, Edmund Dieulafoi, whose grandfather and father fought under the great Napoleon, asking me for my daughter's hand."

"Please go, Alphonso dear. Leave the matter with mother, Veronica, and myself. Good-bye, dear. I will see you later. You know when and where," pleaded Josephine again.

Monsieur Laudet retreated with as much dignity as he could under these humiliating circumstances.

The distressed state of mind in which the ladies of the family were left can well be imagined. Josephine was broken hearted with chagrin and humiliation at the treatment accorded the man she had consented to marry.

Her mother and sister tried vainly to comfort and soothe her, and as regards Madame Dieulafoi, the love of her daughter and her hatred of a French Republican, which she shared equally with her hus-

band, conflicted and aroused in her bosom dissonant emotions.

When Monsieur Dieulafoi joined the group, Josephine turned on him, and addressing him fiercely and fearlessly, said, "It is not just nor right, sir, to inflict upon your daughter humiliation and punishment for any political views you may happen to hold. We, all of us, mother, Veronica, and I, revere the Bonapartists equally with you. But their day is over. It is not right nor just to punish and inflict misery and humiliation upon us for something with which neither Monsieur Laudet or myself had any concern. We regret your anger, sir, and would have treasured your consent and blessing upon our marriage. Nevertheless, we are determined to marry."

"You are, are you? You ungrateful child. You can never remain a daughter of mine if you do. You can take your choice between your father and that whelp of a republican. I forbid you to have anything more to do with him, the republican scoundrel. You will brave my wrath, will you, you undutiful girl! Remember the wrath of an outraged father is a terrible thing," thus replied her father to her spirited remonstrance.

"Oh, father, be just. Be reasonable. Do not let your blind passion destroy the happiness of your Josephine, I pray and implore you, my father." With these entreaties, Josephine burst into a fit of uncontrollable weeping.

"It is useless, Josephine," interposed her mother. "Your father is set against either of his daughters marrying a republican, and I am, too. Your father is right. No good can ever come of it. The Dieulafois are Bonapartists forever. '*Vive l'empereur*'!"

"Hurrah! Well said, my noble wife. You are a true Bonapartist. Our emperor would, were he alive, be proud of you today. Do go and comfort our child, and try and instill into her your spirit. Had she the true Bonapartist spirit, she would pluck the memory of this man from her breast and throw it forever into the sea. If she marry this republican she is no longer our child."

Veronica in the meanwhile had been doing her best to comfort her sister, and was able to check any further angry and defiant retorts from Josephine.

She grieved sincerely with her sister, and regarded her father's conduct as harsh, and illogical to the point of irrationality. But in the present temper of her father, she knew that it would be useless to attempt any sort of reconsideration or to try in any way to alter his decision, so she decided to abide her time until his anger and resentment cooled down, and he was in a more rational frame of mind.

Josephine retired to her room, accompanied by her mother, who endeavored to persuade her to acquiesce in her father's decision, but all to no purpose, for Josephine remained obdurate, notwithstanding all her mother's entreaties and postulates.

Though greatly attached to her mother, and revering and respecting her father, Josephine was sorely wounded by the gross injustice of the position that her father had taken. She herself was an ardent Bonapartist, but the Bonapartist cause was dead when the present regime of France was taken into consideration. True, there was the Prince Imperial; but he had, in her opinion, not an

earthly chance of re-establishing the Imperial House of Bonaparte, then why, she questioned herself, should her happiness be destroyed and wrecked by a blind adherence to a bygone glory? Her parents, she contended, were carrying their loyalty to an absurd degree. She was very, very angry with her parents, and very, very sorry for herself, and she resolved in her own mind to marry Laudet, even should she have to do so against the wishes of her parents.

The next day Veronica entreated her father to alter his decision. She used every plea within the range of her reason, but all to no purpose. The gnarled tree could not be made to bend, so Veronica had to give it up, and sadly confessed to Josephine the failure of her pleadings.

The next day Josephine left her parents' home; and Monsieur Laudet, having made all the necessary arrangements, they left for Paris the same day and were duly married there.

Josephine had left behind her a spirited letter, upbraiding her parents, especially her father, for forcing her to marry elsewhere than under his roof, and she further expressed her belief that her conduct was the only logical outcome of their persistence in a matter that had no relevancy at all to the matter of her marrying Laudet. The Bonapartists' cause was dead, and would remain dead, and why, she asked, should it have been resurrected to mar her future happiness, and to destroy her peace of mind?

The anger of Monsieur Dieulafoi, on reading this defiant epistle from Josephine, together with her having left his roof in the manner she had, to marry Laudet, knew no bounds. He acted like a

man bereft of his senses. He summoned his wife and Veronica to his study, and fairly forced them into taking an oath that they would never even mention the name of Josephine to him or to anyone, nor were they to mention the fact of Veronica having a sister. In short, the infuriated Bonapartist endeavored to completely cut off forever Josephine from himself and his family.

Madame Dieulafoi and Veronica felt constrained to do the bidding of the old warrior, for they greatly feared his wrath and were apprehensive of his sanity. Thus was Josephine completely severed from her family.

At the time of Laudet's marrying Josephine, he was about thirty years of age, a finished product of the world. It would be as well here as anywhere to give our readers a short biographical sketch of this interesting, although ignoble gentleman. His many qualifications and his gifts have already been recounted. Outside of his personal gifts and accomplishments he had many talents. His knowledge of music was phenomenal. The range of his voice was extensive. His proficiency in modern languages made him invaluable to the diplomatic corps of his government. He could practice the utmost dissimulation and he could assume an air of ingenuousness that deceived everybody. He was free with his money as well as with his talents. He dressed in the most fastidious and extreme fashions of the day. He was punctilious in many things, and assumed a frankness of manner which disarmed those with whom he came in contact. All the deviltry in his nature he most sedulously covered up and concealed. None would have ever sus-

pected in him the heart of a villain under this cloak of consummate dissimulation, which he had so woven around himself to hide his true nature. At times he would abandon himself to excessive dissipation, wine, song, and particularly gambling. The remarkable physical constitution that nature had so generously bestowed upon him served to obscure those signs of dissipation which in a less vigorous nature would have been only too apparent. Even after a prolonged debauch, he never showed the slightest sign or trace of it in his countenance, or even in his behavior. His imperturbility and his natural bonhomie captivated and disarmed his companions. He was designing, cool, crafty, and calculating. No small wonder that Josephine was thoroughly enamoured and utterly deceived by the man. Poor Josephine. She went to the flame like a moth to the candle. There was one art that Monsieur Laudet possessed to a superlative degree, and that was to captivate all with whom he came in contact. To such a degree did he possess this uncanny and sinister influence that it partook of the character and form of hypnotism. Over Josephine he appeared to exercise this influence, and she was perfectly passive and plastic in his hands. It was not long after they were married that she became vaguely conscious of the overweening influence her husband exercised over her. She at times experienced a feeling of awe towards him. At first her great attachment to him obscured this feeling, but as time wore on, she had to confess to herself that she at times dreaded his presence. But she could not explain in any way this strange feeling which at intervals took possession of her.

On the other hand, Monsieur Laudet seemed to take delight in bringing his wife under his malign influence. It was not long after his marriage that he began to resume his riotous habits, which even his power of dissimulation could not altogether conceal from his wife; but she apparently was not able to remonstrate with him, so completely did he exercise his power over her. Monsieur Laudet, being a clever and shrewd gambler, and a trickster at that, was always able to meet his very heavy expenses. There were times when he lost heavily. It was on these occasions that Laudet, in an unguarded moment, would reveal his true self. But these times were few and far between, and he would severely take himself to task for his exhibition of weakness, as he called it. His purpose was to keep himself well in check, as part of his armamentarium, in order to deceive both friend and foe. He did not purpose being off-guard even with his wife. He invariably showed the greatest affection for her for he was genuinely in love with her, as a nature so debauched as his could love. He treated her with the utmost consideration, and was very proud of her beauty and accomplishments. On one occasion when she was induced to speak to him, when absent longer than usual on one of his gaming exploits, he said to her in the most insinuating manner, "My Josephine must not be too inquisitive and too exacting with her Alphonso, for she must remember that her husband must have money to live, and to give his adorable Josephine what she needs, and what she desires—a grand house, servants, money, and horses. Then my wife must remember that she did not bring her husband a *sou* when he married her, and did he not take

you, my dearest one, without a *dot*, and we must have means, you know, to live, and my meager pay is altogether insufficient for our wants."

"Alphonso, you know I did not marry you for a grand house, for servants, for money, or for horses, or for any of those luxuries that you have so lavishly showered upon me. I married you, my darling husband, because I loved you, and I would be happy with you in a cottage could I have you all to myself. When are you going back to London, dear? My parents and my sister have utterly ignored me. I can endure the contumely of my parents but oh! Alphonso! My twin sister! My Veronica! from whom I have never been separated from our birth until I married you. Her continued and studied silence will well nigh break my heart. I cannot endure it any longer!"

At this Josephine burst into tears, at which her husband fondly caressed her, and taking her hands from her eyes, said, "Josephine, you do not really love your Alphonso. If you did, you would not fret so for your sister. Your Alphonso, if you loved him as you say you do, would be everything to you—father, mother, sister, and friends—everything. That is what I call love."

"Oh, Alphonso, you know that I do love you. Have I not sacrificed everything for you? Kiss me, my Alphonso. I will try and be brave for your sake."

Thus it was that no matter what wild escapade Laudet indulged in, he was always affectionate and indulgent to his wife, and her infatuation for him increased rather than diminished as the months passed.

Monsieur Laudet came from one of the best

known bourgeois families, a family that attained its prosperity during the regime of the first Napoleon. His grandsire was a merchant-jeweler, a man of very shrewd business instincts. He had no scruples in taking undue advantage of the many opportunities of a doubtful character that presented themselves during that disturbed period. He died leaving an immense fortune to his children. Though he had seven sons born to him, all but two had perished in the wars of that period. These two children inherited their father's vast estates.

The grandfather of Alphonso, after whom he was named, carried on his business, to which he added that of a private banker. He was a careful, shrewd, money-making man, like his father before him, so that when he died, he bequeathed to the only two sons he had, Louis and Jerome, (named after the brothers of the great Napoleon, Louis one-time king of Holland, and Jerome king of Westphalia), his immense fortune. But Louis did not inherit the business instincts of his father, but rather was he inclined to the acquisition of knowledge. He was strongly attracted to the profession of law, in which profession he rose to great prominence, so that during those turbulent days of 1871, after the defeat of France by Germany and the establishment of the Republic, he was very active and conspicuous, and turned to be an ardent Republican, and rendered great service to the newly-formed republic, more especially by his profound knowledge of constitutional law and to some extent by his great wealth.

Jerome, his younger brother, managed the mercantile and banking business, inherited jointly

with his brother Louis from their father. This legal luminary, ardent Republican, and politician, Louis Laudet, was the father of the Alphonso of our story. His mother died in giving him birth, thus was he deprived of her fostering guidance in childhood. Alphonso was most carefully educated and instructed and early showed the brilliant powers he possessed. Included in his curriculum was a three years' study course in a well known English University. Unfortunately for Alphonso, his father died when he had just concluded his stay in England. At the time of his father's death, he was barely twenty-three years of age. His uncle Jerome followed his father to the grave within six months, and as he had never married, the great bulk of the Laudet fortunes fell to Alphonso.

It was not long before Alphonso plunged into the wildest dissipation, and lavished his wealth with such an open hand upon every sort and kind of questionable undertaking that he became the talk and gossip of every capital in Europe. His education, knowledge, and accomplishments, acquired with so much care and oversight by his father, insured to him a large circle of acquaintances, famous and infamous, but so reckless and extravagant was Alphonso that at the age of twenty-seven he had practically dissipated his immense inheritance.

He was enabled for a while, however, to live on his reputation, but that too finally failed him, so he was constrained to seek some means of livelihood.

His affability, his charm of manner, and his finished education, and his wide knowledge of lan-

guages, in the acquisition of which he exhibited a peculiar aptitude, together with the facts so well recognized of his father's great services to the Republic, made it an easy matter for him to secure an under-secretaryship in the diplomatic service. Here, had he chosen to exercise his remarkable talents, it would have been a simple matter for him to have achieved great distinction in the government of the Republic. But his love of pleasure and dissipation caused him to be an object of concern to his political sponsors, who were for the most part ardent friends of his deceased father, but even they had to admit, notwithstanding his failings, that Alphonso's great ability and singular qualifications for the many delicate matters of a political nature which had to pass through his hands made him almost indispensible.

At the time of his introduction into our narrative, Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, as stated before, was in his thirtieth year. He had been connected with the diplomatic corps of his government in Constantinople, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, being transferred to England, in the usual line of promotion, just a short while before he married Josephine. To do him justice, he married her with the best intentions and resolutions. He was truly in love with Josephine, so far as a nature like his could be susceptible of a genuine affection. He had asked for and obtained a year's leave of absence from his post in London, and had resided in Paris ever since. He had installed Josephine in a pretentious mansion, and had lavished luxuries upon her with a profusion consonant with his usual reckless methods, and as we have already

said, Josephine began to see the hollow mockery and sham of it all; and she resolved, if it were at all possible, to wean her husband from Paris and his riotous companions, and return with him to London, where he would be compelled to hold himself more in check; but all her endeavors proved unavailing, as he still persisted in his desperate gaming, which, however he invariably turned to his own best advantage.

We must now turn our attention to Veronica. The loss of her sister's companionship was a sad blow to her, that sister who had pre-natally and contemporaneously occupied with herself the same maternal biviere, and who had shared with her the same cradle, and the same joys and sorrows all through their early childhood; that sister who had contemporaneously blossomed into young womanhod with herself and who shared with her all her adolescent hopes and fears; the being, indeed, who was a part of herself; and that she should be so suddenly severed from such a companion was a blow that would have crushed the most buoyant nature. But the quiet patience and fortitude of Veronica stood her in great stead in helping her to bear up against this her first great sorrow.

She was in many ways a most unusual girl. The influence of her home, transplanted as it had been from its native soil and environment into a foreign atmosphere, doubtless had a depressing and saddening effect upon her parents, and thus it was that her home environments were tinctured with melancholy and regret. The constant recounting by her parents of the incidents of the past, and their frequent references to the misfor-

tunes of their own exile, and the continued brooding over the disasters that had overtaken their own beloved chief, the Emperor Napoleon the Third, and his brilliant and accomplished wife, had the effect of tinging her whole life with a genuine sorrow, and added to this was the sadness occasioned by the unfortunate circumstances of her sister's marriage, and her complete severance from herself. A settled melancholy stole over Veronica, which did not escape the notice of her devoted mother, who endeavored to dispel it by still further devotion if that were possible. Her father, however, whose constant brooding and wrath over Josephine's marriage caused him to be absorbed in his own rage and passion, was not conscious of the change in Veronica. Veronica herself made many brave efforts to throw off this depression of spirits that had taken possession of her. She strove with great earnestness to devote herself, more and more, to her music and to her pupils. Madame Favard, at whose home Josephine first encountered Laudet, censured herself as being the innocent cause of Veronica's changed condition of life, brought about by the unfortunate marriage of Josephine. This good and kind-hearted lady exercised herself in every conceivable way to mitigate and assuage the sorrow of Veronica, and to dispel the state of settled melancholy that had come over her since her separation from her sister. She prevailed upon Veronica to accept employment of a very lucrative and dignified nature, as a private musical entertainer. She succeeded in securing for Veronica many well-paying engagements in the homes of her influential and wealthy friends.

The beauty of Veronica, and the natural charm of her manner, together with her musical genius, soon caused her to be extensively sought after, and her constant application to this very congenial work tended in a great measure to lighten her spirits, and helped her materially and gradually to shake off this state of melancholy.

At the same time Veronica was conscious that a great change had taken place in herself; and she began to experience a longing for somebody to fill the great gap that had been made in the hitherto even tenor of her life. So often it is in a woman's life that a great sorrow will have spent itself from its very excess and intensity, and in its wake will follow a great joy.

The talents and gifts of Veronica and her personal charms soon swept her into a social current of highly cultured, sincere, and warm-hearted people, and among the many young gentleman of wealth and rank that she frequently encountered, many of whom, no doubt, must have greatly admired her beauty and her singular charm of manner, and who must have also sought eagerly to further cultivate her friendship, it would have been altogether unusual, and out of keeping with the eternal fitness of things, if, out of this quota of admirers, this great joy, to which we have alluded, should fail to materialize and there should not come into her life that great joy which all natural and wholesome young women look ardently forward to—the joy of marriage, a home, and that supremest of all joys, maternity.

CHAPTER V

A NEW WORLD VILLAGE LAWYER AND DOCTOR

For many days after Mr. Reginald Streetfield left the village of Great Hope, Tennessee, he was a fruitful theme of conversation among the natives of that picturesque hamlet. He was viewed and discussed from every possible angle, and to borrow an anatomical phrase, he was thoroughly dissected. The consensus of opinion was that, although an Englishman, he was a right down good sort, and would have made an excellent citizen of the great Republic; that it was his misfortune and not his fault that he was not.

There was, however, one man in that community who did not have much to say regarding Reginald Streetfield, good, bad, or indifferent. This citizen had met the young Briton on various occasions. On these occasions Streetfield happened to be in the company of Miss Mary MacKenneth, escorting her to Silas Thompson, to the Wilcox home, or to her own mountain home.

This citizen was no other than Dr. James Douglas Vernon, or as he was commonly called and known as, Doctor J. Douglas Vernon. The doctor was practically a new-comer to Great Hope. He had succeeded to the arduous and exacting practice of the old and retiring doctor, who had for so many years attended the sick and suffering of that village and the surrounding community.

A very well disposed man was the doctor, conscientious and painstaking in his work, and devoted to his profession, and far better equipped

than the ordinary country practitioner of those parts, and he was thereby able to establish himself in the confidence and good grace of the community. That Mr. Silas Thompson and himself should soon become warm companions is not surprising, especially so, as the doctor was particularly fond of a game of chess, and when patients were not numerous, and the community was more than ordinarily healthy, he would play a game with him either in his own office or that of the attorney.

Dr. Vernon was at this time in his twenty-eighth year. He was good looking, high principled, of excellent habits, well brought up, belonging as he did to one of the oldest families in the state of Tennessee. He was very well informed in his profession and enjoyed an extensive practice. But what appeared to disturb the equanimity of the good dames of that community was the fact that he was still unmarried. Hence, it is not surprising that he was looked at and coyly eyed by many a comely village and mountain lass. The doctor, however, proved impervious and unsusceptible. Many indeed were the expressions of regret uttered by the mothers of these young ladies at his unattached and solitary state.

"It is a pity," they were wont to say, "that so fine a young man, and a doctor at that, does not think of marrying and settling down, as a medical man ought to do, according to our way of thinking."

"There is Jane Bowers. She would make a good match for the doctor, she being the only child of Anthony Bowers and he having two hundred and forty acres of the finest land that the sun ever shone on, and every acre paid for. True, Jane is

the little better of the doctor in years, but what of that? She would, for all that, make him a good wife, to say nothing of the two hundred and forty acres of land that would be coming to her when her father dies," another would remark.

"Why! there is Harriet Harding," a third would say, "She is more of the doctor's age. She was a clever girl at school. They say she is right smart at most things, and plays the piano just perfectly, and sings just lovely, and is a model housekeeper; a good, sensible girl, and quite pretty, too. Here is a good chance for the doctor." Another would solemnly assert that she herself had heard Harriet's mother say that she would not object to her daughter keeping company with the doctor, as he was a young man that any young lady might be proud of.

Then another would join in and say, "Why, there is Annie Carrigan, and there is Agnes Smith, and there is Jessie McDermot, and Polly Ralph, and Martha Whitcombe, all good girls, every one of them; and surely the doctor is to be censured and pitied if he decides to remain single with so many nice marriageable girls in the neighborhood. There is no excuse for his continuing to lead a lonely life."

The doctor had been there about two years, and he evinced no disposition or inclination to mingle with the girls, except in a friendly and perfunctory manner. This distance (aloofness the good dames called it) brought down upon his head many a sharp criticism. They would, however, conclude their criticisms by adding, as if to soften the asperity of their remarks, that he was a good doctor for all that, as they had to acknowledge, and

he had good success with his cases, and had helped many sick people. There was Mrs. McDermot, the mother of Jessie; had she not been ailing for years, but this young doctor, he finds out what was wrong with her, and he persuades her to undergo an operation, and now she declares that she is as well as she ever was in her life. Thus and so, did these good people talk and gossip about Dr. J. Douglas Vernon. Dr. Vernon was not altogether unaware of what was being said about himself. To all this he paid scant attention, and wended the happy or unhappy, as the vicissitudes and the exigencies of his life permitted, tenor of his unmarried way.

The doctor had, nevertheless, a secret of his own, which he kept securely locked in his bosom. That secret was, that from admiring Mary MacKenneth he had come to love her, as she blossomed into young womanhood, with all the intensity of his southern nature. Dr. Vernon had taken advantage of every opportunity that presented itself to be with Mary. He would go out of his way to show her many little attentions and courtesies. He would, on occasion, meet her at Silas Thompson's when he happened to drop in upon that worthy friend of his. Mary, on her part, evinced the greatest friendliness towards him. She held his medical skill in high repute, and admired him for his conscientious devotion to duty. She never once suspected, however, that the doctor regarded her in any other light than that of a free and frank girl of the mountains. Mary MacKenneth was the one, and only reason, that Dr. Vernon had not much to say when the young English aristocrat's praises were sounded, for he had more

than a lurking suspicion that Mary MacKenneth regarded the Englishman with favor. On one occasion, when Mary was extolling the absent Englishman to Dr. Vernon, he said to her jestingly, but really with a view to sounding her feelings for Reginald Streetfield, "Perhaps yours is a case where absence makes the heart grow fonder?"

"Why, of course, we are all fond of Mr. Streetfield, Dr. Vernon. Papa, Uncle Silas, the Wilcoxes, Emily and myself, we are all equally fond of him, and miss him greatly since he went back to England."

"I do not mean it that way, Mary," continued the doctor, trying to make his point. "What I wanted to ask was—Have you yourself a great liking for Mr. Streetfield?"

"I have a great regard for Mr. Streetfield, and admire so many of his traits; and I like him of course," rejoined Mary with sincerity.

"I mean, like him very, very much," persevered the doctor.

"Of course I like him very, very much. We all do, and do you not, Dr. Vernon?" replied Mary very innocently, apparently not divining that Dr. Vernon was angling for some admission of affection on her part for Reginald Streetfield.

"I did not see so very much of him, Mary, and perhaps, should I get to know him better, and as well as you do, I shall admire him as much," replied Dr. Vernon, diplomatically. "I am certain you will," replied Mary with evident enthusiasm; and Dr. Vernon, finding his interrogations were leading to nothing, changed the conversation.

The doctor would have declared to Mary his affection for her, but he hesitated on account of

her youth, and besides, he had a wholesome respect for Angus MacKenneth. He was not quite certain how Angus MacKenneth would regard a declaration of love on his part to his daughter. He might regard it as something that partook of an unwarranted obtrusion on a tender and immature mind. He might even resent such an act, on his part, as taking an undue advantage of his position, and a betrayal of confidence. Angus MacKenneth had been extremely kind and friendly to Dr. Vernon ever since his advent to Great Hope, and had spoken many a good word for him, and had highly extolled his medical skill, and had, in addition, directed many patients to him. Dr. Vernon had seen MacKenneth on more than one occasion when his wrath was kindled and he accordingly entertained for him a wholesome respect. But Mary was young, and the doctor felt that time was on his side, and in the meanwhile, he purposed consoling himself with such happiness as he could glean from their many casual and friendly meetings.

Mary was greatly beloved by her own mountain folk, and many were the calls she would make upon the sick, and frequently she would even stay overnight and watch a sick baby and share the anxious vigil of a mother. On some of these occasions Dr. Vernon would be thrown into her company; and did not the simple folk say that the doctor was so attentive, and had stayed hours with the dear sick child, and that he had watched the effects upon the baby of every single dose of medicine, and that it was owing to his unselfish devotion alone that their dear child recovered? But alas! we have to confess that it was the presence

of Mary MacKenneth that prompted this extreme zeal and, perhaps, altogether unnecessary interest on the part of the doctor. But nobody knew this but himself. Nor did Mary ever suspect that she had had such a stimulating effect on the professional zeal of Dr. Vernon. Alas, poor man, so choice and so rare a mountain flower he dared not cull!

The doctor sedulously guarded Mary in his own way, and was even jealous of Reginald Streetfield. But recently he came to regard his rivalry as so remote as to be altogether negligible, and dismissed him from his mind.

On one occasion Mary's foot slipped from under her while picking her way down a slippery pathway and she sustained a painful wrench of her ankle joint, which grew worse after she arrived home; so much so, that Dr. Vernon had to be summoned, and from the very careful and gentle way he manipulated that hurt ankle one would have supposed that he was handling the choicest and the most fragile piece of alabaster, which the slightest jarring would have broken into a thousand fragments.

How solicitous was he, to be sure! And the measures he adopted to allay the excruciating pain, and his words of sympathy and encouragement would take a whole page to relate. However, Mary was well again in a week or so, and without in any way desiring her to be hurt or in pain, Dr. Vernon was grateful to the good Lord for affording him this slight opportunity to render her some little service.

Dr. Vernon had on occasions dreamed of Mary being very ill and he at her bedside watching her

every breath, and maintaining a constant unwearied and unremitting vigil until his adorable patient had successfully passed the crisis; then would ensue the period of convalescence and her expressions of gratitude. Later would come his declaration of love and Mary's impulsive acceptance, and her artless acknowledgement that she had loved him for a long, long time. Then there would follow in a short while the father's consent and blessing, and all his life would thereafter be lighted by the constant sunshine of her presence. Thus would he often ruminate as he slowly wended his weary way over the rocky pathways of the mountain sides on his faithful nag. So sacredly did Dr. Vernon guard his secret that none ever suspected his feelings toward Mary, not even Grace Wilcox, and the doctor was by no means a rare visitor at the Wilcoxes' home.

He was there occasionally on professional calls, but he far more frequently made social and friendly visits. Dr. Vernon was much liked and highly respected by all the members of that household. He visited the Wilcoxes far more often than usual in the hope and anticipation of meeting Mary there, which was often the case. Dr. Vernon knew that Mary shared the same governess with Emily Lawrence and he counted upon her being there a large share of her time.

Miss Emily Lawrence would at times tease Mary about the doctor, but even this did not arouse any suspicions in her mind that perhaps, after all, she was the object of the doctor's solicitude, and the cause of his frequent visits at the Wilcox home. Mary liked the doctor and regarded him much in the same way as she did Silas Thompson, only in

an infinitely less degree.

As for herself, Mary had not as yet experienced anything that could be interpreted as so tender a feeling as love. She had up to the present been heart-whole and fancy free. Hers was a frank, open, ingenuous, buoyant nature, bubbling over with the pure exuberance of youth, with never a shadow to cross it. Towards Reginald, a good seven years younger than the doctor, she felt a warmer feeling. When he left, she admitted to herself that she missed him and his genuine companionship. Even this passed off, as the days wore on, and nothing was left in her mind but a pleasant memory.

As for George Wilcox, her cousin, he too, showed her much attention, and was very solicitous for her comfort and welfare on every and all occasions. Mary regarded George more in the light of a brother, and in that sense was perfectly frank, free, and easy in her attitude toward him. Although George greatly admired his cousin Mary, he had never allowed his admiration for her to blossom into any tenderer regard for her. George Wilcox knew too well the attitude Angus MacKenneth would take in such a circumstance. He, too, had always looked upon his Uncle Angus with a certain feeling of awe. He felt that his Uncle Angus would resent the broaching of any tender sentiment to his daughter on his part.

Grace Wilcox, as already stated, was really a very handsome young lady, vivacious, sparkling, and brilliant. She was popular among the young people of her own age. Although some thought that she at times assumed an air of self-assurance not at all pleasing to a democratic community and

society, be that as it may, it did not deter her from having many admirers among the many eligible gentlemen of her acquaintance. Miss Grace never really had had a sweetheart, and Dame Rumor said she was too fastidious, and too proud and haughty, and that her numerous admirers were ever held at a safe distance. Grace had made several trips abroad, and had traveled extensvely in her own country, yet *sous tous les rapports*; she apparently remained (to adopt Queen Elizabeth's motto) *semper eadem*, always the same, fancy free and heart-whole.

Mrs. Wilcox had other ambitions for Grace, and perhaps it would not be unjust to Grace to say that these ambitions of her mother, insidiously instilled into her mind, had some little influence in her assuming that reserved and almost haughty attitude which she manifested at times.

When Reginald Streetfield visited them, hope sprang high in Mrs. Wilcox, that now at last an opportunity had presented itself whereby her ambitions for Grace might be realized. But Reginald was just a boy in that sense, and was apparently impervious to any sort of romantic attachment for the present, at any rate. To do Grace justice it should be stated that she in no wise lent herself to her mother's ambitious schemes, and that her deportment toward Reginald was always reserved and strictly within the limits of the most punctilious propriety.

Dr. J. Douglas Vernon was an attractive man with a highly intellectual and refined face, handsome, as men are considered handsome, and far above the ordinary standard of medical men met with in those country districts. With him Grace

was by no means indisposed to coquette on occasions. For the doctor it would have been an excellent match, and, belonging as he did to one of the oldest famiiies in Tennessee made him that much more eligible for Grace. And as she had a fortune in her own right, and would, moreover, inherit equally with her brother George the extensive Wilcox estates, there is little doubt that had not the doctor been so wrapped up in his own romantic love for Mary MacKenneth, Grace Wilcox would have crossed the Rubicon with him and would have assumed the responsible duties and entered upon the life of a physician's wife.

It has been stated that Dr. Vernon was a frequent caller at the Wilcox domicile, and was always cordially received. He was not so blind as not to see that his attentions would be welcomed by Grace, but he never ventured beyond the bounds of conventionality, and Miss Grace's innate modesty and sense of propriety on, the other hand, would not permit her, under any circumstances, to have assumed anything approaching or even suggesting an aggressive attitude.

Rather was she restrained than otherwise, except on those rare occasions when the doctor adopted a bantering attitude and she, not to be outdone, would assume a coquettish one in self-defense; but be these things as they may, Dr. Vernon still remained in his state of blessed singleness, or single blessedness, just as one may wish to express it, and Grace still continued to adorn the home of her parents.

It is not to be supposed that such an astute observer as Mr. Silas Thompson was not aware of Grace's feelings for Dr. Vernon, the feelings of the

party of the second part, as he facetiously thought of her. Mr. Silas Thompson did not suspect in the least the cause of Dr. Vernon's indifference to Grace, as he regarded Mary as a child, and he took it as a matter of course that everybody looked upon her in the same light. He never seemed to be conscious that Mary was fast blossoming into womanhood, and that her power of attraction was growing stronger from day to day. The charming *naivete* of Mary's mannerisms caused him to overlook the fact that his protege, or as he called her, his mountain rosebud, was fast reaching the full growth of womanhood, and that she could not always remain a child.

Grace, on the other hand, was more understandable. She was just a matured woman, of legal age, and one was justified in dwelling upon the probability of her early marriage. But Grace was certainly not a young lady who wore her heart on her coat sleeve for jackdaws to peck at. She had a just appreciation of her own worth and her own station in life. Mr. Silas Thompson regarded Dr. Vernon as an extremely fortunate man when he discerned that Grace would not be adverse to his advances.

Mr. Thompson thereupon resolved that, should an opportunity occur, he would broach the subject to the doctor. Nor had he long to wait. Dr. Vernon, as stated before, would, when at leisure, often play a game of chess with Silas Thompson. They were playing a game of chess on this particular day, and he remarked, to open the way to what he was desirous of saying, "Do you know, doctor, that it is kind of you to give an old fogy like myself so much of your leisure time. It has been a puzzle

to me why you have not selected one of the many beautiful girls the community boasts of and settle down under your own vine and fig tree."

"Oh, I do not suppose that any of the girls around here that are worth having want to be bothered with me," retorted Dr. Vernon. "I am afraid I am too prosaic, too much wrapped up in my work. I would soon pall upon a wife."

"I am not so sure about that, doctor, I know of a very estimable lady, who I am sure, regards you with favor, and should you decide to buckle on your armor, why, you have my best wishes. It is up to you, as the saying goes."

"And pray who is the fair damsel you have in mind, Mr. Thompson?" inquired the doctor, laughingly.

"Can you not guess?" queried Mr. Silas Thompson.

"Perhaps I can, and perhaps I cannot, but I am not going to," replied Dr. Vernon.

"Well, if you won't guess, I will have to tell you. I suspect you know, however. It is Miss Grace Wilcox."

"My dear Silas, do you suppose that Miss Grace Wilcox would for a moment deign to consider an impecunious country medical practitioner like myself? You have another guess coming to you, Mr. Thompson."

"Perhaps I have, and perhaps I have not, to quote your words, doctor. But I do not see why Miss Grace should look askance at you. She is wealthy in her own right. That is generally known and I am not divulging professional secrets. You are, on the other hand, well versed in your profession. You are leading an extremely useful life though perhaps

in a limited field You are young and strong, mentally and physically, and with a brilliant future ahead of you. Your family is equally as old, reputable and respected as the Wilcoxes. I can see no hindrance to your marrying Miss Grace Wilcox, and I am convinced that you will find little objection on the part of the family."

"Perhaps you are correct, Silas," as the doctor sometimes called him when discussing or talking upon any serious or personal matters. "But here is one who does not purpose undertaking the risk of refusal. To tell you the truth, although I admire Miss Wilcox and admit her many excellent qualities and accomplishments, I cannot, at any rate in my present frame of mind, entertain any thoughts toward her excepting those of friendship, esteem and admiration."

"Matters will shape themselves, matters will shape themselves, doctor. To be frank, I somehow feel that you both are destined to be man and wife."

"It is very generous and kind of you to feel like that towards me, Silas, especially in regard to so excellent a young lady as Miss Grace, but I assure you, that, as far as I am concerned there will be nothing doing," replied Vernon good humoredly.

"Well, well, doctor, we shall say no more about the matter. It is your next move on the chess board. White to move and checkmate in three moves. See whether or not you can make that a success. It may be more difficult than the matter we have just been discussing."

"White moves Queen."

"Black moves king's bishop's pawn, and asks for silence."

"White moves and calls Queen check."

"Black moves king's bishop's pawn, interposes."

"White moves queen's knight."

"Black moves queen. Checkmate."

"There, you see, doctor, I have checkmated you in three moves. You ought to have won in three, but you did not, and lost to me in three instead. Thus it is in life. When we have everything our own way we make the wrong move and fail to win. Let this be a lesson to you, doctor, from an older man, not wishing in the least to be hypercritical. Play another."

"I am afraid I cannot. I have a late call, so will say good-night, Uncle Silas. You are a good man, every inch of you. I regret there are not more like you. Good-night."

Dr. Vernon was lost in a brown study as he wended his way to his patient's house.

He could not help but admit to himself that he had been affected in some little degree by the gentle, refined influence that surrounded Grace Wilcox, as well as by her own great charms; and he further admitted that it would be a most auspicious and advantageous marriage for himself if he married into the Wilcox family. He was ambitious to further his studies along certain highly specialized lines and that would need no inconsiderable sum of money. This he did not have, or could he secure it from his parents for they had been utterly ruined by the War of Secession, being reduced from great wealth to positive indigence. Should he marry Grace Wilcox, he could see the fruition of all his ambitions. In his present scope of activity the work was hard, exacting, and not very remunerative, the fees being small, and even

at that, very precarious and difficult in obtaining. It would take a few years before he would ever be in a position to further his ambitious schemes.

Doctor Vernon felt, at the bottom of his heart, the futility of waiting for Mary. Mary was young, immature in mind and affection, and her further development was naturally, after all, a matter of uncertainty. Supposing she should never care for him, and should possibly care for somebody else. These thoughts often flitted through his mind and filled him with apprehension and uncertainty.

Doctor J. Douglas Vernon lived in rather a pretentious house for Great Hope. It was large and roomy, and well shaded by splendid poplar, magnolia, and pine trees which virtually surrounded the house, and converted it into a veritable *rus in urbe*. The doctor employed a man and his wife to take care of his house. The wife looked after the house, and the husband his horses, besides being a general handy man and attending to all matters outside. Philip Knox was his name, but he was generally known as Phil Knox.

Phil Knox was something of a natural philosopher. He was a good-natured, honest, care-free sort of man, faithful in his duties, which, however, had to be carefully set forth for him. He was invaluable to Dr. Vernon. His imperturbable good nature stood him in good stead in accommodating and accustoming himself to the necessarily irregular habits and work of the doctor. Phil Knox would arise cheerfully at any hour of the night to saddle the doctor's horse or to get ready his buggy, as the case may be, and he would often accompany the doctor on many of his calls during

the night, and very frequently during the day.

Phil Knox was so often seen with the doctor, that he too earned the sobriquet of "Doc." Some of the more than usually unsophisticated would, on occasions, call to him, saying, "Say, Doc Phil, come up here and tell us what ails this here kid of ours. We do not want to bother the doctor for every little trifling ailment. You can tell us as well as he can." It was only by the inflexible obstinacy of Phil that he was able at all to resist these insistent pleadings.

He was a man of about thirty years, a type often met with at that time in the south. These men had in them something of the character of that large class in England that usually are to be found around the paddocks. Loyal to their employers, but careless and carefree in their manner of earning a livelihood, come-day-go-day-God-send-Sunday sort of men. Nevertheless, there was something sterling and rugged in their make-up. They were ever ready to play the game, and took their good luck with a good deal of noise and self-congratulation, and their bad luck uncomplainingly and in silence. Phil Knox was a typical roustabout, as this class of men was usually designated in the south. They are frequently met with in the Carolinas, Virginias, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia. They are to be found in most of the southern states and in the southern portions of the northern states. One reprehensible habit that Phil Knox possessed and one which at intervals, would get away with him, was that of drinking too heavily of moonshine whiskey, for the carrying of which, he had cultivated an almost unlimited capacity. He seldom visited the saloons,

or dram shops as they were called, of his own accord. When found in one, it was usually due to some generous soul who had invited him to "lift one," which he did with great alacrity, but he invariably left immediately after. Knox was by no means a bar lounger, or a bar-room lizard, as that class of men, who eternally hug the saloon bars, was called. He had too much self-respect for that. The times that he would get halfseas over were those when some generous moonshiner would make him a present of half a gallon of good whiskey. Phil was never offensive, even in his cups, but rather was he inclined to be loquacious and philosophic. He persistently maintained that religion was synonymous with good citizenship and he would descant with emphasis upon the incongruity of religion and poor citizenship. His philosophy was that a man could not afford to be other than a good citizen. He seldom went to the church services in Great Hope; he left that to his wife, who, as he said, was not versed in philosophy. To be a man, with the emphasis upon a man, was Phil's highest ideal. Like all his class the taking of the Lord's name in vain had become a habit with him. So accustomed have these men become to this form of invocation that they entertain an ill-defined belief that they are, indeed, paying the Deity an indirect compliment by mentioning Him on all occasions. In addition they all too frequently and with an utter disregard of the nicety of expression, prefix the vengeance of an angry Deity as a qualifying and emphasizing adjective, to the male progeny of our domesticated canines, when wishing particularly to denounce some one or some thing. Their language at times, to say the least

of it, is emphatic and picturesque if not edifying, but withal, good natured. They are invariably cheery, and ever ready to hear or recount a good story, especially if the point of the story concerns one of their acquaintances or friends. There is a surprising absence of viciousness in these men. They are for the most part carefree. A mean man to them is synonymous with a vicious one. When they allude to an individual as being a mean man it was to emphasize a vicious one. Once having acquired that reputation, the mean man becomes a marked man in the community. He is a man to be left alone, and not associated with beyond the ordinary courtesies of life, or to engage in a business dealing with, or to enter into any kind of an argument with.

These men bestow their friendship very readily, that friendship being of the communistic kind. They seldom cultivate very close friendships. Should they ever do so, those friendships last a life time. They aim, they say, to treat everybody white, and everybody alike. Should they know intimately a dozen men, and all of these men were good citizens, measured according to their standard of good citizenship, no one of them could claim a greater degree of friendship than the rest. All, they maintain, are entitled to the same courteous treatment and service. Serve one, serve all, is their motto.

Phil Knox's wife was a sallow, thin visaged lady, very austere and religious, punctilious in her attendance at church, and extremely scrupulous in her duties. In fact she was entirely centered in her own affairs and her own affiliations.

She was very conventional, and dressed in an ul-

tra severe fashion. She gloried in keeping her home scrupulously clean. She could often be seen scrubbing down the front porch steps even when it was raining hard. She entertained the utmost aversion to the drinking of alcoholic beverages. Phil had to invent all manner of ingenious excuses after he had been keeping out of her sight and out of the reach of her tongue when in his cups. This, to him, had become an instinct, and in formulating these excuses his brain functioned almost automatically. Phil preferred, he said, meeting the devil to encountering the blistering tongue of his wife, when he happened to be on one of his sprees.

That Mrs. Knox should believe or pretend to believe Phil's most absurd excuses, to account for his periodical absences, calls for some explanation. She feigned to believe him because she was then prepared without any violation of her conscience, to refute with indignation any imputation that some kind but officious neighbor might bring against Phil. No sooner did the neighbors begin to say aught against Phil to her than she would vehemently refute it and refuse to believe it or countenance anything that they might say against her husband.

Phil was aware of this peculiar angle of his wife's disposition, and the remembrance of it, on more than one occasion, helped him to respect his wife's prejudices, and to curb his appetite for good moonshine. He would often hold forth vigorously before his wife and her friends over the evils of rum, much to the edification of his wife, who would quote Phil's arguments when vigorously

denying any insinuation that he was himself in the habit of over-indulging.

With the aid of these two faithful souls Dr. Vernon was well served in regard to the creature comforts of his existence. Phil seemed to divine his master's partiality to Miss Mary MacKenneth, and he was most scrupulously polite to her. Mary, on her part, was always gracious to Phil. As for Angus, he had taken a liking to the crude philosopher, and would often draw him out in his quaint witticisms, which were a source of much amusement to MacKenneth

Phil, like the rest of his neighbors, entertained a deep respect for Mr. MacKenneth, not, however, unmingled with awe. He had never forgotten that years ago, when he was a much younger man, and before he had met the present Mrs. Knox, how Angus MacKenneth had saved him from an awkward, not to say dangerous situation.

It happened in this way. Phil had been drinking heavily of moonshine and, as was usual with him under those circumstances, propounded some of his philosophy with great emphasis and self-assertion. Umbrage was taken at the vigor of his speech and manner, and one word leading to another, he soon became embroiled with half a dozen of his fellow citizens. They proceeded to manifest their disapproval of his philosophic views by attacking him. Phil, who was as courageous as a lion, fought back vigorously; but he was soon overcome and would have doubtless received grevious injuries at the hands of his infuriated opponents. Angus MacKenneth happened to be passing by on his horse, and seeing the predicament of Phil, he rode into the group and soon extricated

him from his unenviable position. Since then Phil had entertained a most wholesome respect for Angus MacKenneth. It soon became known that MacKenneth favorably regarded Phil, and this stood him in good stead when he indulged in his extravagant contentions.

Another valuable acquisition of Phil was his loyalty to the boys of the moonshine fraternity, as he called them. He had a natural gift of recognizing a revenue officer, no matter how disguised. He would frequently warn his friends by a secret signal, which would be relayed from mountain side to mountain side, and in this way did he help them and frustrate the efforts of the revenue officers to ferret out the locations of illicit distilleries. For these very valuable and timely services, Phil was often surreptitiously rewarded with half a gallon of moonshine whiskey.

The life of Dr. Vernon was one of hard and unremitting toil. He had little in common with his clientele, except that, being a man of broad humane feelings, he was gratified when he was able to help a fellow creature with his professional skill.

On one occasion a company of revenue officers decided upon seducing Phil Knox from his loyalty to the moonshiners. He was to receive a reward of fifty dollars for every distillery located. Having consented to this, Phil led the officers a merry chase over the crags and ravines and mountain tops, and through deep crevices, finally abandoning them in an almost inaccessible fastness by creeping away himself through a hidden crevice and by a secret pathway, which were entirely obscured by the rugged and overhanging rocks. The revenue officers had a most unenviable night of it.

CHAPTER VI

THREE MODERN MUSKETEERS

Dr. Vernon and Mr. George Wilcox became fast friends. The doctor, although several years older, evinced a feeling of warm affection for his young neighbor, and this friendship, as one would naturally expect, frequently brought him into the society of George's sister Grace, and between them a strong feeling of comaraderie was established. It was about a year after Reginald Streetfield had returned to England that George Wilcox was taken very seriously ill with an attack of mountain fever, which he had no doubt contracted by accompanying Dr. Vernon on many of his professional calls and jaunts over the mountains. With the aid of an excellent nurse, Grace's constant solicitude, and the skill of Dr. Vernon, George Wilcox pulled through his dangerous malady. His period of convalescence was slow and protracted, however, and Mr. Wilcox, senior, suggested that George take a sea voyage and that Dr. Vernon accompany him. The doctor was loath to give up his work among the simple folk of his district, but Mr. Wilcox placed the remuneration so high, that the financial advantage proved too alluring. He therefore decided to take advantage of the offer. The money thus earned would help him, he reckoned, to realize his ambitions to take a course of study in the world renowned medical schools abroad, and would enable him to perfect himself in the special line he had chosen. Mr. Albert Wilcox insisted that Phil Knox accompany them as valet to both, and later he was to transfer his services to George.

To this proposal Phil agreed with considerable alacrity. Phil had recently made one or two slips in his ambitious resolutions to keep temperate. He secured his wife's consent to his going abroad with the doctor by adducing the specious argument that he would be free from the seductiveness of moonshine whiskey, which whiskey, he asseverated, was the only kind he craved. Besides, would he not be away, he said to her, from the temptations offered by the munificence of moonshiners, who frequently donated to him demi-johns of whiskey.

The doctor prevailed upon Mrs. Knox to continue her services as housekeeper to his successor. All these arrangements finally being concluded, Mr. George Wilcox and Dr. Vernon, attended by Phil Knox, departed upon a long cruise through the Mediterranean and the countries bordering thereon.

George had been the recipient of many anxious letters from Reginald and he, in turn, duly informed his friend of the contemplated cruise, and promised to see Reginald in England, where he expected to be in three or four months.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to recount the many incidents of the pleasant voyage, beyond stating that Phil Knox rapidly grew in popularity with the ship's crew. He seemed to be a source of perpetual amusement to many of them. His popularity was not confined to the crew. His quaint philosophy interested the passengers as well.

On more than one occasion Dr. Vernon had to call him to account, for he had kept some of the

crew so continuously amused as to distract them from their duties.

"I shall have to put your man in irons," said the captain to Dr. Vernon one day, jestingly, when Phil Knox had provoked more than ever the uproarious mirth of the crew. "He must leave my crew alone."

Phil really did seem to possess the faculty of amusing them, and this interfered with the ship's work. "We shall most certainly have to do something with him," replied Dr. Vernon as he observed Phil the center of an admiring and hilarious group. "We shall have to throw him overboard, put him in irons, or administer a narcotic to keep him quiet for the rest of the voyage."

We have this much to say of Phil Knox. He was strictly temperate! He had solemnly asserted to his wife that it was the moonshine whiskey that was at fault, and not himself. He was demonstrating the truth of that statement, beyond peradventure. The purser, the chief steward, and several of the officers had, time and again, offered Phil a glass of spirits, and less potent beverages. The self-righteous manner of Phil's refusal would cause them infinite amusement.

Mr. George Wilcox improved in health rapidly. After visiting several of the seaboard cities of the Mediterranean, which included a trip to Jerusalem, and a run to Constantinople, the party disembarked at Naples. They visited Rome and Venice, and passed over the Alps to Vienna. Here Dr. Vernon parted company with Mr. Wilcox, the doctor having decided to continue his studies there.

Phil Knox was to accompany George Wilcox and was assigned, for the time being, solely to his

service. Two months had passed since they had left New York, and George had now recovered his usual vigor. It was with the deepest regret that these two friends parted company. Mr. George Wilcox and his man Phil wended their way to London via Paris.

Mr. Wilcox had letters of introduction to several men of prominence in Paris. So hospitable and kind were these people to George Wilcox that he lingered in Paris much longer than he intended or anticipated. The unfortunate Phil Knox, because of his utter ignorance of the French tongue, caused him to be a man apart. He struggled manfully to learn the most commonplace words, but with little success. He was very scrupulous in attending to his employer's wants, and he would not hesitate to threaten and even to fight if he considered that Mr. George Wilcox was being overreached in any way by the employees of the hotel at which they were staying. Phil Knox, however solitary, had one companion. He was the porter at the hotel, a young Irishman of about twenty-five; and speaking the same language, they soon became fast friends. This young man went by the name of William Burke. He was generally known as Bill Burke. Phil Knox would, on occasion, facetiously remark about a Bill and a Phil. These two became such inseparable friends that Phil, who knew a few facts of astronomy gleaned from his conversations with Dr. Vernon when they together made those long tedious drives on starry nights, in days gone by in Tennessee dubbed himself Castor and William Burke, Pollux. These stars, he told Bill, were two of the greatest stars in the heavens, while they were the two big men

in the retinue of that hotel. Will Burke spoke French fluently, and was thereby able to get along well with the native French, from whom, indeed, it was difficult to distinguish him. Bill was undoubtedly a great acquisition to Phil, who would have been lost entirely if Bill had not accompanied him on his excursions and perigrinations in and around Paris.

It happened that at this time Captain Tom Brosby (he was a captain now) had occasion to visit Paris, and, as fortune would have it, he elected to stay at this same hotel. Accompanying the gallant captain was his military orderly, Harry Brooks. It did not take very long before Phil Knox, Bill Burke and Harry Brooks became well acquainted. Nor were Phil and Bill and Harry any the less gratified when they found out that Captain Brosby and Mr. George Wilcox were old acquaintances. The Captain was delighted to find George Wilcox in Paris. He and George had met on more than one occasion at the home of his sister, Lady Streetfield, at Streetfield Manor, Gloucestershire, England.

The Captain had heard of the serious illness of Wilcox, and congratulated him on his excellent recovery. A new vista opened before Wilcox, for the Captain had a wide circle of acquaintances in Paris, and took it upon himself to make George's stay there as pleasurable as possible. It was not many days before Captain Brosby was thrown into the society of Monsieur Laudet and he, with his usual ease soon ingratiated himself into the good will of the Captain. Through Brosby, Wilcox got to know Monsieur Laudet and was at once fascinated by the charming manners of the young

French diplomat. Laudet's thorough knowledge of English, and his clear enunciation of it, was a great asset which enabled him to hold and extend his influence upon his newly made friends.

"That Frenchman, Mr. George," Phil said, "That the Captain brought up here, he is no good at all. That man, Mr. George, I would not trust near a chicken coop. He reminds me of one of those there revenue officers that used to come down to Great Hope. He is too sweet to be nice. Take my advice, Mr. George, and stay away from him. He is not a good citizen."

"I guess I can take care of myself, Phil," retorted George Wilcox good humoredly, amused at his servant's solicitude.

"Perhaps you can, and perhaps you can't, George Wilcox, but me for the tall timber when I see such a guy around," retorted Phil, sententiously.

Phil in moments of great confidence would address Mr. George Wilcox as George. He had known his employer, boy and man, and had called him George in his boyhood and young manhood. George Wilcox was too little of an upstart to resent such good-natured and well intentioned familiarity on the part of his employee. Besides, the line of cleavage between master and man is not so closely drawn in the States as it is in Europe. However, these occasions only happened when they were alone. In public Phil was punctiliously respectful to his employer.

Nor were Bill Burke and Harry Brooks any more impressed with Monsieur Laudet than Phil Knox. They were all conscious of the baneful influence that the Frenchman was beginning to exert upon the Captain and George. Monsieur Laudet,

with his usual astuteness, did not overlook any opportunity to ingratiate himself into the good will of Phil Knox, Bill Burke and Harry Brooks. He was bountiful in his largesse to them, and affable and courteous whenever he had occasion to address them; but even that condescension and liberality upon his part did not alter the aversion that these three men had taken from him. Laudet carried off Captain Tom (as he was usually referred to by his orderly) and George Wilcox, almost every day, to parts unknown to their respective servants. They would often stay away until the small hours of the morning, when the Captain and Wilcox would return in an hilarious mood, looking much the worse for wear. Bill Burke, who was familiar with every nook and cranny of Paris, traced the trio to a notorious gambling resort in the environs of the city. He had even gone as far as to pry into their movements when inside. He related what he had seen to his companions and the three of them concluded that George Wilcox and Captain Tom had fallen under a very malign influence. It was fortunate for the Captain that he was recalled to England upon important military affairs. He had just passed through an experience which might have terminated very seriously both to Wilcox and himself. Harry Brooks, the orderly, had been watchful as a weasel, and had taken cognizance of every move his Captain had made when in the company of Monsieur Laudet. Captain Tom and George Wilcox spoke French sufficiently well to express themselves intelligently on any topic. Will Burke overheard Laudet arrange with Captain Tom and Wilcox to meet at the Chateau d'Eaulant. He heard

Monsieur Laudet also say that he had invited several French officers of the Chasseurs d'Afric to meet the Captain and Wilcox at a game of cards. Captain Brosby and George Wilcox were really very skillful and careful players.

The purpose of Laudet was to allow the Frenchmen, who were extremely wealthy and played for high stakes but were indifferent players and took their losses with a good deal of sangfroid, to lose heavily to the Englishman and the American. He anticipated that they were bound to do this, owing to the skillfulness at play of Captain Tom and George Wilcox. He purposed himself to lose to them to some extent also. At this juncture he had arranged that a telegram be delivered to him, which would furnish an excuse for his absence for a short while.

In the meantime the game was to proceed without him, and the French officers, he felt assured, would still continue to lose heavily. At a time arranged, a pack of apaches in Laudet's service, were to pounce upon the players and strip them of all their money and, binding them hand and foot, decamp with the loot. Later he was to return and play the role of savior of the party. Wine, brandy, and absinthe were to be liberally supplied, and their creature comforts were sumptuously provided for by the keepers of the Chateau d'Eaulant.

Laudet had very carefully thought out his plans, and purposed leaving nothing to chance, but he did not reckon upon Bill Burke, who had overheard his invitation. So impressed was Bill Burke with an apprehension of impending disaster to Captain Tom and Mr. George Wilcox that he traced Laudet to the Chateau d'Eaulant, and saw

him meet two apaches and engage them in earnest conversation. Bill Burke, of course, took care not to be observed. After Laudet was through with the apaches, and had disappeared, he contrived to get into conversation with them, and pretending that he himself was one of their own kind, he was able by his native gift of dissimulation, which he possessed to a high degree, to finally so gain the confidence of these two apaches that they disclosed to him the whole plot, and invited him to join them in their enterprise that night. This Will Burke apparently was delighted to do. He lost no time in communicating to Phil Knox and Harry Brooks the details of his adventure and his discovery. Harry Brooks related that his Captain had returned several times with immense sums of money upon him, which were, he confided to his orderly while in his cups, his winnings at the table. George had acted in the same manner, for that matter.

The plan of Monsieur Laudet was an old one of his and he had carried it out successfully many times before. It was not difficult for Laudet to arrange the details of this one; on the contrary, it was extremely simple.

The Chateau d'Eaulant was one of those ancient residential buildings that had been saved by a fortunate dispensation from the general destruction that overtook so many of those ancient houses of the gentry and nobility of France during the revolution of the previous century. At the time of the revolution the Chateau lay beyond the environments of the city, but now owing to its rapid growth, it was well within the confines of the city.

To leave nothing to chance, Laudet provided a stool pigeon, in the person of a certain Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, an impecunious barrister whose affability, wit, and good breeding would insure him a friendly reception by the other members of the party.

Harry Brooks had been more than usually solicitous lately of his military superior, and was apprehensive of some impending evil. The previous evening Captain Tom had returned with considerable winnings. He had staked heavily and won. The Captain also showed the effects of heavy drinking.

Laudet had arranged to have at dinner that evening, George Wilcox, Captain Brosby, Monsieur Rochecauld, and the three French officers. After a most convivial meal, at which the sparkling witticisms and *bon mots* of Henry Rochecauld aroused the party to a high state of gaiety and enjoyment, and after paying a visit to the Opera Comique they repaired to the Chateau d'Eaulant. There a short colloquy took place at the gate with the concierge, after which the massive gates were opened and their carriages allowed to enter the secluded and well-guarded premises.

Mr. William Burke had, earlier in the day, made a very careful survey of the chateau and its grounds. He learned that the chateau grounds were fairly extensive and surrounded by a massive wall twelve feet high, the top of which had been skillfully spiked. He discovered that a branch of a spreading chestnut tree extended well over a section of the wall. This suggested to him one method of entrance to the Chateau grounds. He reasoned that by throwing a rope attached to a

ladder over the extended branch, they would be able to climb up into the tree, and avoid the spiked wall, and by the same device descend the other side. Will Burke, who was an able-bodied seaman, having served his time before the mast, knew that this could readily be done. Having made mental notes of all these matters, he returned to his companions, Phil Knox and Harry Brooks.

A council of war was held and they mapped out the following plan of campaign. They decided to take with them a collapsing ladder, with a suitable rope and hook attachment to grasp the bough of the chestnut tree, also some cord and several large handkerchiefs, to be used in case any binding and gagging had to be resorted to. Each of them was to carry two revolvers. They were to proceed, thus provided, to the Chauteau d'Eaulant in three cabs, the loyalty and co-operation of whose drivers Will Burke could readily vouch for, these drivers being friends of his. They were to halt some little distance away. They were to be ensconced behind some favoring hedges.

That night at about twelve o'clock the three proceeded in separate cabs to the Chauteau. On arriving they alighted and cautiously made their way to that part of the Chauteau wall overhung by the branch of the chestnut tree, Will Burke leading the way. On arriving there, he succeeded in noiselessly attaching the collapsing ladder, by means of the hook, to the overhanging branch, and they were soon on the tree well inside the wall. Unfastening the ladder, they secured it to another and inner bough, and let themselves down into the garden of the Chauteau, without raising an alarm.

Once within the grounds they proceeded to advance cautiously towards the chauteau itself. After a careful reconnoiter they discovered that they could gain access into the chauteau through a window on the upper story. Fortunately the shadows from the elm trees that surrounded the chauteau obscured their actions, for it happened to be a moonlight night. Bill Burke soon had the ladder in position, placing it directly under the window through which they intended entering the house. Fortune favored them again, as a brisk breeze sprang up, which moaned and whistled through the trees, preventing in that way any adventitious sounds being heard. Will Burke, already having the ladder in proper position, crept up and reached the window, which he pried open by a few dexterous movements with a burglar's jimmy he had provided for just such an occasion.

At this juncture, a door at the back of the Chateau opened, and a woman and a man in livery appeared. A shrill female voice was heard to say, "I am sure, Brouget, I heard a noise like a window creaking." This brought Burke scampering down again.

"Nothing but the wind, Madame," responded her companion. "Cannot you hear how the wind howls to-night?"

"It is truly a boisterous night, Brouget. It may have been a dried and withered branch that crackled being broken by the force of the wind. I cannot see how anybody can get in here. However, I shall keep my ears open, and if I hear it again, I shall summon the gate keeper, and will not rest satisfied until I have searched all around

the house. I will go upstairs in the meanwhile and see if the windows are all fastened securely."

You may be sure that our three amateur burglars kept very still and silent while this conversation went on. A new danger confronted them. Should Madame find the window pried open, she would without doubt give the alarm and this would lead to the upsetting of all their carefully laid plans. There was not much time to be lost. Will Burke, who appeared to be able to think the quickest, seized some rope and a few of the large handkerchiefs and climbed deftly up the ladder after instructing the others to follow him with the rest of their paraphernalia. He climbed through the now opened window and was soon inside, and none too soon. Before Madame, however, could open the door, Burke ran softly across the room and stood to one side of it, using his dark lantern to avoid striking any object that might obstruct his path, thereby preventing any unusual sound that might warn the lady before she entered. As soon as ever that lady entered, Burke flashed the light on her, and at the same time placing his arm around her neck from behind, he covered her mouth with his hand. In a moment he had securely gagged her with a handkerchief and proceeded dexterously to bind her hand and foot, which the nature of his work as hotel porter and sailor, greatly aided him in rapidly completing. Soon Phil Knox and Harry Brooks entered the room and assisted Mr. Burke in carrying the exceedingly ponderous body of Madame, bound and gagged, and they forther helped him to place her comfortably upon a bed they discovered in the room adjoining. The next thing that would hap-

pen, they felt convinced, would be that the man addressed as Brouget would soon come up stairs in search of the missing woman. Nor were they wrong in their conjectures, for presently they heard a voice calling, "Madame, Madame! Where are you? Why do you stay up there? You are wanted in the kitchen." There being, of course, no reply, Monsieur Brouget's heavy footsteps were heard ascending the stairway, muttering to himself as he came up, "The devil take that woman, giving me all this trouble, anyway." He called out again, as he neared the top of the stairs, "Madame, Madame, where are you?" and opening the door, he cautiously peered into the room. In a moment he was dragged to the floor, gagged and bound. The three men then carried him into an adjoining room, and placed him upon a bed there, and left him to reflect upon the stupidity of Madame. But before doing this, they stripped him of his gorgeous livery, which Will Burke then hastily donned over his own clothes.

Burke then made his way down stairs, on a reconnoitering expedition, after admonishing his companions to remain very quiet upstairs, and only to come down when he gave a sharp short whistle.

Burke had no sooner arrived at the bottom of the stairs when he heard someone say, "Go, and see, Henry, what has become of Brouget and Madame." On hearing this Burke beat a hasty retreat and joined his companions, and as he heard Henry ascending the stairs, he called in a gentle voice, saying to the man Henry, "Come here, Henry, come here. Madame has fainted." Henry hurried upstairs and dashed into the room saying

excitedly, "What is the matter, Brouget? What has happened to Madame?"

"Only this," replied Burke, quickly gagging him, while his companions seized his arms and legs and bore him to the floor.

"We want you to keep company with Madame and Brouget. They say that you are so clever and entertaining that they greatly miss you and cannot get along without you at all at all, especially Madame, and we must oblige a lady, you know," said Burke in his inimitable Irish way. Thus Henry was bound and gagged and placed securely alongside of Monsieur Brouget, after being stripped of his livery. Burke then said, "Here, Brooks, you put this on, and if we find another of these pretty birds, it will be Phil Knox's turn to don the livery. You boys stay here. I will give you the signal when I need you." With this Will Burke cautiously crept down the stairs and entered the room adjoining the kitchen, which he carefully surveyed. It was empty, but he heard the sounds of revelry proceeding from the front of the house; and he made his way towards that part of the house from which the sounds seemed to come. After signalling his companions, he opened the door noiselessly, and peered into a large room.

Bill Burke saw that there was another man in livery, and he said to himself, "Phil Knox is sure in luck. He will soon have his new and pretty suit of clothes." He further saw, seated around a table, George Wilcox, Captain Tom Brosby, Henry Rochecauld, and three other gentlemen, no doubt the French officers de Chasseurs. He observed that large piles of money lay before George Wilcox and Captain Tom, and he correctly surmised that they

had been winning heavily. It was necessary on that account to act with expedition and dispatch, so he returned to the kitchen to join his companions, and they waited there the advent of the third man in livery—nor did they have long to wait. The waiter having served the party with another bottle of champagne, had withdrawn to the kitchen. No sooner was he well in that room, than he was seized, gagged, stripped of his livery, and bound and then carried upstairs and put into another bed to keep silent company with his silent friends. It was Phil Knox's turn now to don the livery, which he did much to the amusement of the other two.

"I wonder when Monsieur Laudet is going to get here," said Bill Burke. "If he wants any of the swag, he will have to hurry up." They held a consultation as to their next move, which would be the most delicate of all. It was finally decided that Harry Brooks, clothed as he was in his new livery, should go into the room, get behind his Captain, and whisper in his ear, "Keep still, Captain. Do not move. Pass the word to Wilcox. You are both in danger. We are here to protect you." All this Harry Brooks was to do without exciting suspicion. After he had communicated this warning to his Captain, he was to withdraw, and they were all to go in together, disguised in their suits of livery. Harry Brooks, having performed his part with greater ease and success than he anticipated, withdrew to the kitchen. The three of them then entered the room together, as agreed upon. Will Burke, without exciting any suspicion, took a position behind the French officers, and while filling their glasses gently whis-

pered to them, advising them to keep still as they were in a dangerous situation but that they were protected and would soon be rescued, provided they kept still and did not arouse suspicion. Monsieur Henry Rochecauld was covered by a revolver by Phil Knox. Captain Tom, it can well be imagined, was completely at sea with the strange words and behavior of his valet, but being a military man and used to quick changes, he promptly surmised that something very unusual had transpired, and as a good soldier obeyed orders. "Depend upon me. What's your game?" whispered the Captain to Harry Brooks, and added, "I have already put Wilcox on his guard."

Will Burke then spoke up: "We are sorry to trouble you, gentlemen," he said, "but you must hasten from this house. We have carriages waiting outside; we must get away as soon as possible. We are in a den of thieves."

Captain Brosby soon took in the whole situation. The French officers were non-plussed, and remained silent, while Henry Rochecauld tried to bluster; but Phil Knox, who had him covered with his revolver, said, "Sit still. Don't be moving. You look to me like one of them revenue officers, way back in Tennessee, that I used to know, and maybe I might take some satisfaction in plugging you on that account." All this, of course, he said in English, which was unintelligible to Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, who gazed at him with fear and amazement. As for Wilcox, he did what Brosby told him, and remained very still, but completely bewildered at these sudden and dramatic events that were taking place around him. He could hardly believe his eyes, when he saw his servant

Phil Knox holding a revolver to the head of Monsieur Henry Rochecauld. All these events had taken place so rapidly and suddenly as to leave Monsieur completely befogged.

Captain Tom then spoke up, his military instinct of command asserting itself, and addressing the French officers said to them, "Tell me your losses, gentlemen. We will return you your money. There is no time for explanation, Messieurs. Major Vernaid, what are your losses? And yours, sir? And yours? Ten thousand five hundred francs, did you say, Major Vernaid? And yours, you say, are ten thousand? And yours, sir, six thousand? That makes in all twenty-six thousand five hundred francs."

Captain Brosby then counted out that sum from George's winnings and his own, and, pushing it towards the Frenchmen, said, "Do your own dividing. Our witty and amusing friend here, with a revolver at his head, Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, gets nothing. His losses and those of Monsieur Laudet remain with us to do with them whatever we want. Their disposition will be determined later by Mr. Wilcox and myself. Monsieur Laudet may perhaps later reimburse Monsieur Rochecauld."

The Captain then ordered Harry Brooks to gag and securely bind Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, in which occupation he was cheerfully assisted by Phil Knox, from whose mutterings one could occasionally catch something about a revenue officer.

Mr. Will Burke, of his own volition, had gone after the carriages. The true situation was made known to the three French gentlemen, who were profuse with their thanks to Captain Tom and

George. Mr. Henry Rochecauld was taken upstairs and deposited upon a bed like the other three. Will Burke soon returned with the carriages and hurried the party out of the house. Carriage lights could now be seen at a distance, which were doubtless those of Monsieur Laudet and his pack of cut-throats. It would be better for all concerned, they had concluded, to avoid an encounter with the apaches, who were desperadoes of the worst and most dangerous type. Captain Tom and Mr. George Wilcox and the three French guardsmen, followed by The Three Musketeers, as Captain Thomas Brosby had very appropriately and facetiously named Will Burke, Harry Brooks, and Phil Knox, made quick exits. All three still wore their borrowed liverty so as not to excite the suspicion of the concierge who looked after the gate. The concierge had opened the gate to admti the carriages at the command of Will Burke, whom he had taken to be one of the servants of the chateau. Getting into their respective carriages without any further delay and adventure, the party drove rapidly away and passed the carriages bearing Laudet and his apaches just a short distance from the chateau.

When Laudet and his apaches arrived at the chateau, they were stricken dumb with astonishment and rage to find conditions as they were. The gate keeper could give no intelligent explanation, except that the three liveried servants and the gentlemen had gone away in hired vehicles, which he had admitted, he said, into the chateau grounds at the behest of one of the liveried servants. They found the house silent and apparently quite deserted. After a good deal of speculation

and conjecture, they finally concluded to search the house, as the gate keeper had declared that he was convinced that Madame had not accompanied the party.

The astonishment of Laudet can well be imagined when he discovered his friend and co-conspirator, Henry Rochecauld, gagged and bound on a bed, as were also Madame and the three servants, *sans* livery. It is hardly necessary to state that these four prisoners were more than delighted to be released from their extremely unpleasant situation, to say the least of it. Monsieur Rochecauld, Madame and Brouget, with the other servants, were able, between them, to give Laudet a fair narrative of what had taken place. It was when Rochecauld related what had been done with the money that the rage of Laudet was the greatest. The apaches threateningly demanded their pay, and insisted on holding Laudet to his agreement. To avoid bringing about a dangerous quarrel with these desperadoes, Laudet had to pay them five thousand francs, the amount which they had agreed upon.

Monsieur Laudet found to his great chagrin, not to say rage, that he had lost out on every side.

On their way home, these three musketeers, to adopt the name Captain Tom had given them, divested themselves of their suits of livery, and threw them out of the carriage windows for those to find who might.

On arriving at the hotel, a council was held in Captain Tom's room. The Captain had found orders awaiting him to return to England and rejoin his regiment without delay. Under these circumstances the whole party decided to leave that very

morning for England. Will Burke, at the urgent solicitations of Captain Tom and Harry Brooks, had decided to proceed to England with the party, and had agreed to enlist in Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment, in order to be with his chum, Harry Brooks, more especially as the 110th foot regiment was likely to be sent out to India on active service.

George Wilcox and Captain Tom Brosby agreed that their winnings on that eventful evening at the Chauteau d'Eaulant, in justice to our three Musketeers, ought to be made over to them, and as these winnings amounted to nearly ten thousand francs, our three musketeers came out of the affray more than amply rewarded, as they were most willing to admit. As to the three French Guardsmen, they too left Paris to join their regiment, which at that time was stationed in Algiers. They called upon Captain Tom Brosby and Mr. George Wilcox before they left for England, and Major Vernaid, as the spokesman of his party, warmly thanked their good English-speaking friends for rescuing them from a very awkward, not to say dangerous situation.

Without further adieu our party set out for England and arrived there on scheduled time, and Will Burke was duly enlisted at Bath in the 110th foot regiment. We shall leave Captain Tom with his orderly Harry Brooks and his new recruit Will Burke, there.

Mr. George Wilcox and Phil Knox, with genuine regret, bade them a hearty good-by and all manner of good luck, and proceeded to London as George Wilcox wanted to get in touch there with his friend Reginald Streetfield.

We may be sure that Phil Knox was greatly

disconcerted at being separated from his two chums. "I never would have thought," he said to Will Burke and Harry Brooks, "that the time would ever come when I would regret not being born a gol-darned Britisher, but believe me, boys, this is the one time that I do. Were I a Britisher, a fine chance would I now be having of going out to India with the boys and seeing some fighting, by enlisting in the 110th foot regiment, the same as Bill Burke. Anyhow, here is good luck to us, boys. You, Bill Burke, and you, Harry Brooks, and me, Phil Knox. What is the diff, boys? We are all bred from the same stock. If we only had some moonshine now, boys, we would drink to the Stars and Stripes of America and to the Union Jack of old England, and a last drink, and a good one at that, to the health of The Three Musketeers!"

CHAPTER VII

THE SWEET FACE OF VERONICA

Before Mr. George Wilcox left Paris, he had telegraphed to Reginald to meet him in London, which Reginald accordingly did. The two friends were delighted to meet again, and Reginald was much pleased to see George Wilcox looking so well and apparently quite recovered from his recent illness, and he set himself about to make George's stay in London as pleasurable as possible.

"I reckon that it will be Tennessee that Mr. Reginald will be in before long," sententiously remarked Phil Knox to George Wilcox one morning. "There is many an aching heart that Mr. Reginald has left behind him there. My wife, she said to me—you see, sir, my wife is quite smart in her own way—she said to me, 'Phil, it is hard on them young women of Great Hope and the neighborhood that a good looking gentleman like Mr. Streetfield should come into our dove-cot and cause such a fluttering and such a commotion, to stay a while, and then go away for keeps.' "

"Shut up, Phil. You are always saying something absurd and extremely stupid. Mr. Streetfield never did anything of the kind. Besides, it is a long time since he visited America," replied George Wilcox in rather a short manner.

"I am just handing out to you, Mr. George, what all the women folk are saying down our way," returned Phil apologetically.

"Mr. Streetfield, I do not think for a moment, would look to America for a wife, and especially to Great Hope," said George decisively.

"Well, sir, he may go farther and fare worse," rejoined Phil, to get in the last word.

At this moment Reginald joined them, and the interesting controversy ceased, and Phil withdrew.

When alone George Wilcox related to Reginald the conversation that had taken place between Phil and himself.

"What rot that man does sometimes talk, Wilcox," said Reginald on hearing this.

"Nevertheless, Reginald," said George banteringly, "there is a germ of truth in what Phil says. Take my sister Grace, for instance. You have certainly made an impression upon her, and you remember my cousin, Mary MacKenneth Nobody interests her any more, not even my worthy self, since your advent to and departure from Great Hope."

"Tut, tut, George. You are altogether incorrigible. I am sure that I am quite innocent of intentionally leaving any such impression behind me, particularly in regard to your sister Grace and your cousin Mary. Please do not draw any further upon your imagination and stop your badinage."

"Phil Knox hints the same thing, Reginald, and he avows that he has the authority of his wife for what he says, and I have learned to rely a great deal upon what Mr. Phil Knox says," retorted his friend jestingly.

"To change the subject, George," said Reginald, "I want you to come with me to see my cousin, Lady Blanche Travelyan. She is the widow of Sir Henry Travelyan, an excellent woman. She invariably takes it amiss should I be in London and not call upon her. We can call together at four o'clock

this afternoon, if you are at liberty. In the meanwhile we can go to my club for luncheon and afterward take a cab to the war office. I have some little matters to attend to there, which will not delay me very long, and then, by the time we get dressed, it will be close upon four o'clock. Lady Travelyan lives in Grosvenor Square. We shall just about make it."

Lady Blanche Travelyan was a Streetfield before she married Henry Travelyan, a rising young man in the Indian Civil Service. Although very wealthy, Henry Travelyan had chosen a hard and highly responsible career. He had early competed in the Indian Civil Service examinations, and had won a high position. On one of his vacations spent in England he had met and succumbed to the charms of Blanche Streetfield. Mr. Travelyan took his wife out with him to India, being at that time the viceregal representative at the court of an Indian prince, and Lady Travelyan found herself, on arriving there, in the exalted and enviable position of being accorded the precedent of all the English ladies in the province, wives of British officials or otherwise. Lady Travelyan's beauty and the charm and graciousness of her manner soon made her a favorite in the circle in which she lived and had her being.

Mr. Henry Travelyan rose rapidly in the Service, for he was a man of indefatigable industry and integrity, and was frequently intrusted with delicate, important and difficult missions by the Government, and as a recognition of his valuable services, the honor of knighthood was conferred upon him. He was created a Knight Commander of the Star of India. Although several children were

born to Sir Henry and Lady Travelyan, one alone survived to reach maturity, and that was Amelia, who at the present time was a young lady of eighteen summers. Sir Henry Travelyan died practically a young man, a martyr to his duty, when Amelia was in her tenth year. Lady Travelyan returned with her daughter to England. She purchased a house in Grosvenor Square, London, where she had since resided.

Miss Amelia Travelyan was a pupil of Miss Veronica Dieulafoi. It so happened that on the evening of this very day, Lady Travelyan was giving a party at which Miss Veronica Dieulafoi was engaged to play and sing. Mr. Reginald Streetfield and Mr. George Wilcox duly called and Lady Travelyan was more than delighted at being successful in extracting a promise from her cousin and his companion, to be present at her party that same evening.

Lady Travelyan was one of those little women who seem to have embodied in their little selves all the charm and grace of their sex. She was still a beautiful woman, and just a little past forty. Amelia, her daughter, was almost the counterpart of her mother and possessed to a large degree her grace and charm. Amelia was slightly larger in figure, but otherwise they were very much alike.

Amelia was delighted to see her cousin Reginald Streetfield, and although a few years younger, they had invariably chummed when children together, for she had often spent her holidays with her mother at Streetfield Manor. Since then Amelia and Reginald had remained warm and close friends.

"I am so glad to see you again, Reggie," said

Amelia. "I was just telling mama the other day that I was beginning to forget what you ever looked like. It is so long, Reginald, since I last saw you, and you have been to the States and back again, and now that I have found you, I am going to keep you all to myself until you have promised to tell me all about your strange adventures in that wonderful country." Nor would Amelia rest satisfied until her cousin had faithfully promised to devote the necessary time to relate to her his experiences in America.

Lady Travelyan was famous for her parties, and it was with much pleasure that Reginald and George promised to be present that evening. After having spent some little time at the Travelyans, the two friends took their departure promising to return in good time for the party. You may be sure that when the hour of eight arrived, Reginald and George were promptly there, and they were immediately ushered into the smiling and happy presence of Lady Travelyan, and of her by no means less amiable daughter.

"Come Reginald," said Amelia, as her greetings were concluded. "Come with me. I will escort you to the most lovely creature you have ever seen in all your ilfe, Miss Veronica Dieulafoi."

Away went Amelia, with Reginald in her wake, in search of Miss Veronica Dieulafoi, who at that time was sitting alone in one of the antique antechambers of which Lady Travelyan was inordinately proud. There Veronica sat toying idly with some beautiful shrubbery, evidently deeply interested in her occupation. So intense, indeed, was her pre-occupation, that she did not observe the approach of Amelia with Reginald until they were

standing almost before her. She quickly glanced up and said, "Mademoiselle Travelyan has given me quite a start."

"Comme est vous, Mademoiselle Dieulafoi, tu es charmante, ce soir. Ce gentilhomme, Monsieur Reginald Streetfield est mon cousin. Reggie, this is my friend and wonderful instructor, Miss Veronica Dieulafoi," said Amelia.

"Reginald bowed deeply to Veronica as she arose and courtesied to him in the prettiest manner possible, saying to him as she did so: "I have much pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Streetfield." She said this in the most dulcet voice that Reginald thought he ever heard, and Miss Dieulafoi added, "Miss Amelia promised me a surprise, this afternoon, Monsieur. You are the surprise, are you not?"

"Oh, you ungrateful girl. How dare you give me away like that?" interposed Amelia jestingly.

"Mademoiselle's secret is too large to keep. Do you not think that you are too weighty and too great as a secret to keep very long?" said Veronica humorously addressing Reginald.

"On that point I certainly agree with you, Miss Dieulafoi," said Reginald, laughing heartily at this very skillful play of words, and he added, "But you were a surprise to me as well. You must concede, Miss Dieulafoi, that my clever cousin Amelia has worked the surprise both ways. I was to meet the most charming young lady in the whole wide world, and she has certainly been as true as a dial to the sun, and has completely fulfilled her promise."

"Monsieur is clever at paying compliments. Let me say, however, that I was to meet a very hand-

some young gentleman, and it is not for me to say whether Mademoiselle Amelia has kept faith with me or not," said Veronica.

"I will answer for Amelia, Miss Dieulafoi, and say that she has signally failed," rejoined Reginald.

"Angling for compliments, are you, Reginald? Let me warn you that you are fishing in very shallow waters, so far as Mademoiselle Dieulafoi and I are concerned," said Amelia in a bantering tone.

"A fig for your compliments, Amelia. You know that you cannot, try as you may, make me conceited," returned Reginald.

"All the good looking gentlemen say that. Oh, there! Now! What have I done? I have actually admitted that you are good looking, Mr. Streetfield! That is what we used to call when I was studying Latin, a *lapsus linguae*," said Veronica jestingly.

"I will take that compliment at lapsed value," replied Reginald, now thoroughly interested in his cousin's vivacious friend, and attempting a play of words on his own account.

"Now you two get to know each other while I go in search of Mr. Wilcox. I want him to meet with 'the surprise' too," said Amelia laughingly.

"You said nothing to me of two surprises, Amelia," retorted Veronica.

"I did not want to unnecessarily alarm you, Veronica. You know the old adage, 'one thing at a time,'" answered Amelia.

"I will endeavor to survive if the second surprise is not as weighty and great as the first," replied Veronica, archly observing Reginald.

"This big surprise can readily disappear, if it will cause Miss Dieulafoi less embarrassment," said Reginald.

"Pray Monsieur must not go away. I may need his assistance, judging from the dire effects of my first surprise," said Veronica with such *naivete*, and with such an amusing expression, and so good-humoredly that Reginald felt himself quite outclassed in repartee, and he prudently decided to steer his ship on another tack, and so adopted a more serious vein of conversation. They fell to discoursing on many matters of a more or less general nature, and Reginald was surprised and gratified to find how wide a range of subjects Veronica intelligently covered, and how really remarkable was her understanding of men and things.

We may as well confess that Reginald stood in great danger of falling a victim to the great charm of her beauty, her manner, and her conversation. Never before had Reginald felt so keenly interested in one of the gentler sex. As to Veronica, we have also to admit that Reginald proved to be unusually interesting to her. His splendid form, set out to the best advantage by his London tailor, and his handsome face, with its clear, sincere, and ingenuous expression, together with his unaffected manner, and his apparently natural gift of conversation—all these had had their effect upon Veronica, and she experienced a distinct sense of regret at the ending of their interesting tete-a-tete.

Amelia came up with George Wilcox and introduced him to Veronica. The four were soon engaged in an animated conversation. After a little

while, they decided upon repairing to the drawing room, where they were soon lost in the brilliant throng.

In due course dinner was announced, and Reginald, to his great delight, was told off to escort Veronica into dinner. Lady Travelyan was noted for the sumptuousness, the heartiness, and the brilliancy of her dinner parties. The magnificently lighted dining room, with its gorgeously and tastefully decorated table, set out to its best advantage with massive silver plate, all surrounded with a happy and brilliant assembly, made a vivid, an imposing and indelible picture.

The cordiality and affability of the hostess seemed infectious, for never was there a more joyous and festive an assembly. Lady Travelyan's entertainments were greatly sought after, and the generally acknowledged excellency of her viands and wines was a matter of comment among the her friends. She never, therefore, experienced any difficulty in having her invitations accepted.

Dinner over, those gentlemen who smoked repaired to the smoking room for their cigars and for more wine, if they felt so disposed, while the ladies adjourned to the drawing room. Reginald went to the smoking room for a whiff. He did not, however, wish to be very long absent from the drawing room as he wanted to hear Veronica play and sing. So he repaired to the drawing room in a little while and secured a seat by his cousin, Lady Travelyan.

"Well, Reggie," she said, "You will hear a most beautiful voice when you hear Miss Dieulafoi sing. I have noticed you, you naughty boy. You have

been giving Miss Dieualfoi most of your attention."

"You do not blame me, do you Blanche?" asked Reginald.

"Blame you? You are certainly to be envied, monopolizing all the evening, as indeed you have, the attention of that most beautiful creature. She is next on the programme. Be prepared to escort her to the piano like a chivalrous knight."

It is hardly necessary to remark that Reginald was only too willing to carry out his cousin's behest, so that when the time arrived for the next number, Reginald, with the utmost ease and grace, escorted the lovely Veronica to the piano. And as for Veronica, she certainly did look very lovely indeed, dressed in red and black, with a cluster of red roses in her hair, all of which seemed to enhance the natural brilliancy of her complexion.

She was no sooner seated at the piano, with Reginald standing to one side, to turn over the leaves of her music, when her fingers passed deftly over the keys, and, as she continued, it was apparent to everybody that she possessed perfect mastery over the instrument, now breaking into a gentle soft rhythm, like the babbling of a stream, and then again, into the restless and tumultuous roar of the ocean, angry and passionate. Again the notes would simulate the quick, tense, words of command, and then they finally resembled the tearing and rending sounds of a soul breaking its shackles, as it were, hazarding all in one mighty effort to be free.

All this Veronica caused the really splendid instrument to say, as if, indeed, it were human. She

held her audience in breathless attention, and when she finally stopped, it seemed as if a whole life's tale had been unfolded in a few moments. After the hearty applause had died away, Veronica chose one of those soul-stirring French revolutionary songs.

To hear her sing was indeed to forget that she had ever played. Her dulcet notes seemed to strike every chord of the heart, and to bring the emotions thus set free into perfect unison with the notes of the singer. Some of the audience unconsciously half arose from their seats, as though drawn by a powerful magnet.

Suddenly her great song comes to an end, followed by a short intense period of silence, and several distinct sighs are audible, as if the prolonged and exquisite pleasure was altogether too much for the human soul.

In an ecstasy of delight, a rapturous encore broke forth, and again she gave utterance to those exquisite sounds; but on this occasion Veronica had chosen a light and airy song, which lasted but a few minutes. She arose and bowed gracefully to the audience in acknowledgement of their evident appreciation. Even Lady Travelyan's party had to come to an end, but not, however, before Reginald had requested and obtained permission from Veronica to call upon her.

The next day but one Reginald called upon Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi. He was received most cordially by the old Bonapartist and his wife. Monsieur Dieulafoi had undergone a great change since the departure of his daughter Josephine. He had become silent, brooding, and at times morose, but he would, on occasion, pull himself together,

and would then appear in all his old-time chivalry and punctilious courtesy.

To Reginald, it did not appear at all, that the rugged Frenchman was under the blight of a great sorrow, a sorrow which dissipated his energies and depressed his spirits. Madame Dieulafoi, on her part, was cordiality itself to the young Englishman. Perhaps she divined with true motherly instinct that the handsome young English gentleman's visit had some connection with an admiration for her beautiful and accomplished daughter.

Monsieur Dieulafoi, with true French hospitality, asked the young Englishman to dinner next day. You may be sure that Reginald accepted, and that he was punctual and prompt. He passed an extremely pleasant evening with the highly interesting Bonapartists, greatly enhanced by the presence of Veronica. Of course he had to listen to almost interminable anecdotes and panegyrics of the great Napoleon, and of the exiled Emperor and his consort while they lived at Farmborough, England. It was fortunate for Reginald that he was particularly conversant with the Napoleonic story; and he was able to converse intelligently with Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, much to the edification of that worthy couple, nor did Veronica fail to join in the spirited conversation.

As a diversion, Reginald asked Veronica to sing the same spirited song she sang at Lady Travelyan's party. This she did, much to the enthusiasm and delight of her father. She also sang several of his favorite songs, but the respite did not last long for Monsieur Dieulafoi very adroitly veered the conversation back to Napoleon by asking Reginald to listen to some of his own personal ex-

ploits, which in all due courtesy Reginald felt constrained to do, and before the eveening was over Reginald found himself in high favor with Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, and very much in love—he had to confess to himself—with Veronica. It was clearly apparent to him that Veronica was by no means indifferent to his advances, and almost insensibly an understanding seemed to have taken place between them. On departing he was earnestly enjoined by the hospitable Frenchman not to allow too great a time to elapse before he called again and partook of their hospitality.

Before leaving, Reginald had managed to glean from Veronica the day and time she would next be at Lady Travelyan's, and he whispered to her that he would contrive to see her there. So he did, again and again, and it did not take a very observant mind to see that Reginald and Veronica were very much in love with each other, and it needed only an expression on his part to bring the matter to a definite conclusion.

This is just what occurred a few days later at Lady Travelyans.

That good and kindly dame had arranged with Amelia that Veronica and Reginald were to be left together, as if by an inadvertence. Lady Travelyan was to leave an excuse for Veronica that Amelia and herself had gone out for an hour or so, to please await their return. They knew, of course, that Reginald would be there anon, and surmised that an hour or two ought to suffice to bring these two souls together, with so much in them that was mutually attractive. Nor did Lady Travelyan misjudge the time and occasion.

Veronica had no sooner arrived when she was

given Lady Travelyan's message. She repaired to the music room to pass away the time by playing the piano, and while awaiting the return of Amelia and her mother, so engrossed, indeed, did she become in her occupation that she did not notice that Reginald had come into the room and was standing directly behind her. She became conscious, however, that there was somebody else in the room besides herself, and turning around, she made an exclamation of surprise which ill-concealed her gratification. As for Reginald, he was too full for expression, so, acting on impulse, he gently seized both her hands as Veronica rose to greet him and, although she made a feeble attempt—but oh! such a very feeble one—to withdraw her hands from his, he held them more firmly, and gently drawing her to himself Reginald said: "Veronica, I want to tell you how much I love you, and I want you, Veronica, all to myself, to be my own sweet wife." He clasped the now willing girl in his arms, and impulsively showered kisses upon her. All Veronica could say was, "Oh, Reginald, you have made me so happy!"

The old, old story was told over again, each one told the story to the other, and then, in a little while, when those exquisite, happy moments had passed, those exquisite moments, when the souls of a human pair filled with the most hallowed and tenderest feelings for each other, are irresistibly drawn, one to the other, soul to soul and heart to heart, forms, as it were, an indestructible amalgam of all that is highest and purest in human nature.

These moments being past, Reginald and Veronica planned as to how they were to impart the

good news to Lady Travelyan. Reginald then told her all about his beautiful and adorable mother and his greatly beloved and noble father, and how he purposed going to them, and telling them all about his wonderful and good fortune, and how overjoyed they would be, in this, his newly found happiness; and Veronica, on her part, assured Reginald that her parents would gladly assent to her marriage. They agreed that when Lady Travelyan should come in Reginald was to beg off Amelia's lesson, and that they would then go to her parents, and Reginald was to ask the good old Bonapartist pair for the hand of Veronica.

The minutes sped only too rapidly for this happy couple, and it was not long before Lady Travelyan and Amelia returned home. They did not seem to be in the least surprised to see Reginald, who greeted his cousin perhaps a little more affectionately than was usual with him, which incident was not overlooked by Lady Travelyan. She also observed that Veronica appeared much embarrassed, so with her usual good-natured artful ness, she said, "Why, what is the matter, Veronica? Are you not well this morning?"

This gave Reginald the opportunity that Lady Travelyan had designed that he should have to make his confession, which he did in his usual manly and straight-forward way and, placing his arm around Veronica, Reginald said, "Veronica has promised to marry me, Blanche and Amelia. Do you not think that I am the luckiest man in the world?"

"Well! well! Reggie! and I include you in this, too, Veronica. What does this all mean? So the mice were playing while the cats were out? Come

here, you dear children, both of you, and let me kiss you." And, suiting the action to the word, Lady Travelyan threw one of her arms around Veronica and affectionately kissed her, and with the other around Reginald's neck, she drew him towards herself and affectionately kissed him too.

"Amelia, it is your turn to kiss the happy couple," said Lady Travelyan, as Reginald and Veronica stood by looking very self-conscious.

"Oh, Veronica," said Amelia. "I am so glad to hear it, dear. You have a very fine, noble fellow in Reginald. We were playmates together, and I ought to know, and as for you, Reginald, you wicked man, you have stolen my teacher, but I am going to forgive you for that. I am so glad and so happy! I really do not know what to say. Here, let me kiss you both." Amelia then followed her mother's example, and heartily kissed both of them in exactly the same manner as her mother had done a moment before.

Dear Amelia! She was indeed her mother's girl—kindly, affectionate, unselfish, and generous to a fault. Although she greatly admired Reginald, and would have gladly taken him herself, had he asked her to marry him, yet she never felt a single pang of regret, but simply rejoiced with both of them in their good fortune—Reginald, for obtaining so lovely and accomplished a girl, and Veronica, for winning the love of so noble a fellow as Reginald.

Both Amelia and her mother were typical of that very large number of ingenuous, generous, sincere, and affectionate natures that one so often meets with in the womanhood of England.

Of course Amelia did not take her lesson. The

happy couple were to proceed immediately to the parents of Veronica, and should they prove to be obdurate, then both Lady Travelyan and Amelia were to descend upon them and beard the lion and the lioness in their den. Veronica, however, assured Lady Travelyan that her parents would not in the least way object, but would, on the other hand, welcome her good fortune in securing Reginald.

The two lovers then bade their kind hostesses a fond adieu and wended their way to the Dieulafoi residence. On arriving there Veronica, taking the hand of Reginald, led him into the drawing room, calling aloud to her mother at the same time, "Come, mother, come mother. Come soon. I have some good fortune to tell you." As Madame Dieulafoi hastened into the room, and even before she had been given time to greet Reginald, Veronica, who could not contain herself any longer, threw her arms around her mother and burst into tears.

"Come child, come child, tell me what it is," said Madame Dieulafoi, looking inquiringly from her daughter to Reginald, and from Reginald to her daughter.

Reginald felt constrained to say, "Madame, I have—." He did not get any further for Veronica interposed.

"Please, dear Reginald, I want to be the first to tell my mother. Mother darling, I have promised to marry Mr. Streetfield," and, leaving her mother's arms, she threw herself into those of Reginald.

"You poor, dear girl," said her mother, half crying and half laughing, "is that the reason why

you called out so hurriedly to me. You wanted your mother, of course, to come to you. My darling child. My prayer is, dear, that you will both be extremely happy," and addressing Reginald, she said, "My Veronica deserves a good man, sir. Any unkindness from you would break her gentle heart."

"You may rest perfectly sure, Madame Dieulafoi, that I will always protect and cherish her. Veronica is very, very dear to me," said Reginald with deep emotion.

"I know you will, I know you will, dear, good, kind sir. I must call my husband. He was saying to me only this morning, Mr. Streetfield, what a fine, noble, young man you appeared to be, and what a comfort it would be to all of us if you looked with favor upon our Veronica.

Just then pere Dieulafoi came in upon the party, and in a few hurried words, Madame Dieulafoi imparted to him all the news.

"Of course, of course, I am glad to hear it, dear wife," and, turning to Reginald, he said, "Veronica, sir, is deserving of a good man, and I told my wife only this morning that I knew you were a good honest man. I know not what your possessions may be, but I am assured of this, that you would not ask a woman to be your wife unless you were well able to suitably support and keep her. Beyond that I care not how little or how much you have. Please place your hand in mine, sir. You are to be our son in future. We were not blessed with a son. Come near to me, my children, and let the blessings of a father rest upon you." The good and pious Huguenot then caused Reginald and Veronica to kneel before him and, placing a

hand upon each of their heads, he said reverently, and with deep emotion, "Father in Heaven, permit, I beseech Thee, the blessings of an earthly father to rest upon these, thy children, through the love of our Savior, Amen—Now, children, stand up, and let me kiss both of you." And he kissed them both on both cheeks, after the manner of the French.

These happy lovers spent the next few days making, oh, so many plans for the future. George Wilcox sometimes accompanied them, to prevent Reginald, he said, from becoming too demonstrative in public. Inasmuch as Reginald had elected to choose a nearer and a dearer comrade than himself—on these grounds—George Wilcox said he based his excuses for occasionally obtruding himself upon their company.

Matters ran along with these lovers as such matters generally do under similar circumstances. Reginald had not written home and his parents had not yet been informed of his engagement. He had purposed from the beginning to carry the news himself to his devoted parents, and so, prevailing upon George Wilcox to accompany him, Reginald and George both left for a visit to Streetfield Manor.

Lady Streetfield and her husband were glad to see Mr. George Wilcox again. He had always been a favorite with them, and the strong friendship that had grown up between Reginald and George Wilcox was a matter of gratification to both of them, but a greater surprise and delight was still in store for Sir William and Lady Streetfield. Reginald, taking his parents into the library, related to them all that had recently happened, and

earnestly asked their approval of his engagement. Reginald also related to his parents the circumstances and causes of the Dieulafois' exile in England. Naturally Reginald rapturously dwelt upon the beauty of Veronica, her high accomplishments, and her wonderful and charming personality.

Sir William and Lady Streetfield listened with intense and loving interest to Reginald, and they rejoiced with him on his good fortune and heartily commended him on making so wise a choice.

Dear Lady Streetfield! She was overcome by the suddenness of the announcement, and her heart already yearned for Veronica. Was not Veronica Dieulafoi, indeed, the woman who was going to make her Reginald happy? The one to reign in her place when Reginald came into the title and the estates of the Streetfields? Was not Veronica Dieulafoi the one who was destined to fill the old Manor House with the laughing voices of romping children? All these thoughts, though perhaps tinged with sadness, passed through her mind and gladdened her heart. It was only when Lady Streetfield gazed upon the photograph of the lovely Veronica that her emotions entirely overcame her. A more beautiful human creature she had seldom seen, and she enthusiastically congratulated Reginald again upon his good fortune as she fondly caressed him. Was he not the only child she had ever known? All his past came up vividly before her; how she had first accompanied him to the parish Sabbath School, when he was but a little fellow, and she recalled also the solicitous kindness of the good Dr. Sharpe; and before her came vividly also the day that he was confirmed into the church of his fathers, and had

taken his first Communion, and how she had longed then and had fervently prayed like Samuel's mother of old, and had asked the Father of All to take into his loving care this little life entrusted to her keeping, and how she had prayed for strength and guidance to perform the full measure of her duty towards Reginald. Then before her appeared so vividly those stated periods when Reginald would accompany his father and herself to the Lord's table to partake of His Supper, and she prayed that now that Reginald had taken this momentous step in his life, for the same guidance and care of him through all his future years. And she further prayed for strength and humility to reconcile herself to her new duties of self-abnegation which must necessarily follow upon her son taking this important step in life. Dear, gentle Lady Streetfield! You have surely vindicated the saying that women are but angels on earth, something connecting the divine with the human.

As for Sir William, he was overjoyed to think that perhaps now he would be permitted to see some of his grandchildren. He had been far from a well man for the last few months and he had a passionate desire that his son should wed, but fatherlike, he was diffident to tell his son of that wish. But now his desire was to be fulfilled, on his son's own volition and initiative, and this was, in a double sense, a matter of gratification to him. Heartily did he take his son's hand again and again, congratulating him upon his good fortune, and he said that he had only one request to make of Reginald, and that was, that he would not unduly postpone his marriage.

Lady Streetfield had been very anxious over the health of her husband for some time past, and she felt instinctively some apprehension when Sir William appeared almost insistent upon an early marriage, and she could not refrain from showing her fears.

"Come, come, dear Dora," Sir William said to her, "It is not as bad as you imagine. We have been spared to each other many years, dear, and it is only right that we should take cognizance of the flight of time, and make provisions for the future." And, taking Lady Streetfield in his arms, he affectionately soothed and caressed her. And he further added, "Come, dear heart, a true mother have you been to our boy, and a noble, gentle wife have you been to me. May God still guide and guard and bless you through all your future years. You must cheer up and dry those tears, and take a more cheery view of matters." And then, Sir William, assuming a hearty tone, said, "We must go to London and call upon Veronica and her parents, and we must ask the good Frenchman and his wife to Streetfield, and we must also urge their consent to an early marriage of their daughter to our son. Here comes George Wilcox. I must drink with him to the future Master and Mistress of Streetfield Manor. Tell James, dear, to bring in the good cheer."

James soon appeared with the cheer, and all drank to the health and the happiness of the future Master and Mistress of Streetfield. Then they drank to the health of one another, and a warm glow of happiness spread over the party, a glow that drove away every sense of the gloom that had

threatened to overshadow Sir William and Lady Streetfield.

After some conversation, it was agreed that Sir William and Lady Streetfield were to leave for London next day to pay their respects to the parents of their future daughter-in-law, and also to make such necessary provision for the upkeep of their son's future establishment in a position worthy of the Streetfields and as the son of a British baronet. All these matters were satisfactorily arranged and an early date agreed upon for the marriage.

Reginald had prevailed upon George Wilcox to postpone his journey to Tennessee until after the wedding, nor did he fail to inform his step-uncle, (Captain Brosby) of his approaching nuptials, and he urged upon the captain to come over to Streetfield and spend some days with him there, and this the good captain hastened to do.

It is well to say here that Monsieur Dieulafoi had at this time exacted from Veronica a reiteration of her vow to keep silence in regard to the existence of Josephine and her unfortunate marriage. Thus it was that Reginald was kept in complete ignorance of the existence of Josephine. Veronica resented and rebelled against this restriction being placed upon her by her father, as indicating a want of confidence in her husband, besides it savored too much of deceit; but, Veronica, knowing her father's temperament as she did, justified herself in this apparent deception and in this conspiracy of silence, as she indeed regarded it, by the consciousness that she was only obeying the stern commands of her devoted parents. Veronica could not, however, divest herself of a feel-

ing of uneasiness in keeping this knowledge from Reginald. She argued that if Reginald should inadvertently discover the existence of Josephine, he would not, on that account censure her, but rather would he respect her position in the matter, and the inviolability of the stringent oath exacted from her by her father at the time of Josephine's departure and subsequent marriage to Monsieur Laudet.

Mr. Henry Oglesby had recently returned with his bride. He had long remained a bachelor, but having succeeded to the estates of his father, he had recently married an estimable and accomplished lady of rank, and had forgotten all about his early infatuation for the beautiful Dora Brosby. Mr. Henry Oglesby had from the first taken a kindly interest in young Reginald, and had watched his growth from boyhood into manhood, and now that he learned that he was soon to be married, he expressed a desire to help in any way possible in arranging matters pertaining to the coming event.

Thus there happened to be gathered at Streetfield Manor at this time Captain Tom Brosby, Mr. George Wilcox, Mr. Edward Oglesby, and Sir Reginald. This quartet spent many a happy hour together in the fields and in other sports so keenly indulged in by and so dear to the English country gentleman. Reginald of course had to make frequent journeys to London to see Veronica, and he enlisted the good services of Lady Travelyan and Amelia in Veronica's behalf, and these good ladies did everything in their power to lighten the burden of Veronica's preparations for her coming nuptials.

Monsieur Dieulafoi and Madame had, upon the urgent solicitation of Sir William and Lady Streetfield, consented to their daughter being married at the old parish church at Streetfield, in which had taken place the christening of Reginald. A date was set, a month ahead, for the wedding. It was Sir William's desire that his son's marriage should take place in *ye good olde time festivities*, and great preparations were made toward that end. The whole neighborhood was to participate and the festivities and fetes were to continue for three days. The county gentry as well as the tenantry, were to be entertained. Lady Streetfield, greatly aided by Reginald, had induced George Wilcox to urge upon his parents and his sister Miss Grace to attend the wedding, and particularly reminded them that they should on no account fail to bring with them Mr. Silas Thompson, to whom Reginald had already written. Thus after a series of cablegrams to and from America, and much to the delight of George and Reginald, the folks in Tennessee accepted the invitation, and they made arrangements to leave immediately for England, to be in ample time for the approaching marriage.

George Wilcox had taken with him his personal attendant, Phil Knox, and Captain Tom also had with him Harry Brooks, and now that these two of our three musketeers were together, nothing would satisfy them but that they should prevail upon Mr. George Wilcox and Captain Tom to urge upon Reginald his consent to having Will Burke join them there. In order, as they solemnly asseverated, to avert from Mr. Wilcox, Captain

Brosby, and Reginald, every and any unlooked for calamity.

Now Phil Knox, Harry Brooks and Will Burke had faithfully kept their promise not to breathe a word to anybody of what had taken place at the Chateau d'Eaulant, on that memorable night when our three musketeers so dexterously extricated Captain Tom and George Wilcox from their very unenviable position, and, as a recognition of their faithful adherence to that promise, both Captain Tom and George asked and obtained the permission of Reginald to have Will Burke come to Streetfield, and Captain Brosby having duly arranged for the leave of absence of private William Burke, that gentleman joined his companions at Streetfield Manor, completing, as Phil Knox facetiously put it, the roster of the three musketeers. These three friends assumed such an air of mystery that the servants of Streetfield Manor began to regard them in the light of some very superior and highly favored beings, and no less than three of the younger male servants of the Manor promptly offered themselves to Captain Tom for enlistment into Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment, and this, be it said here, was successfully carried out after the wedding festivities were over.

Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, with Veronica, had arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Oglesby had insisted, as a matter of personal privilege, that they stay with them until the wedding day. This being a most excellent and conventional arrangement, the kindness of the Oglesbys was gladly and graciously accepted by the Dieulafois. Thus did Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi and Veronica

remain guests of Mr. Edward and Mrs. Oglesby until the day of the marriage. There were yet three weeks to the wedding day, and there took place in that time many pre-nuptial festive gatherings among the county gentry. Veronica was everywhere greatly admired and Reginald was considered the luckiest of mortals in winning so beautiful and so charming a bride. Monsieur Dieulafoi, of course, broke out occasionally in violent denunciations of the French Republic, and then again would he launch with great vim into some incident in the life of the great Napoleon. But on the whole, he was far more subdued than of yore. He was taken good-humoredly and nothing happened to mar the pleasure of the visit of the Dieulafois.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to recount all the strange, to him, incidents that occurred to Mr. Silas Thompson in his journey from Tennessee to Streetfield, Gloucestershire, England, as he accompaned Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, excepting to say that, this being Mr. Thompson's first visit to the Old Land, he obtained the full measure and benefit from his holiday, both physically and mentally. Before he returned to America Mr. Silas Thompson had contrived to visit most of the places of interest and note in Great Britain, and had even taken a hasty junket into Ireland. As we have discoursed at some length upon this approaching marriage, suffice it to say, that the Wilcoxes and Mr. Silas Thompson arrived in due course at Streetfield Manor, and the heartiness of their reception recalled in some degree the open-hearted hospitality of the Wilcoxes in Tennessee. The cordial and even affectionate meeting of Reginald

with his old American friends, and their expressions of delight with the charm of his bride-to-be, all these were matters that followed the natural order of things.

The whole neighborhood was en fete on the wedding day, and as for the bride, nothing had ever excelled her charm and beauty in her bridal costume, and the staid dignity of Reginald in his uniform of a Lieutenant of Her Majesty's 110th Regiment, the happiness of Sir William and Lady Streetfield, the extreme satisfaction and happiness of Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, the almost boisterous glee of Captain Tom, the quiet dignity of George Wilcox, and the gratification and pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox and Grace, and the silent happiness of Silas Thompson, all this had to be seen to be duly appreciated. Nor must we forget to mention the village and country maidens, prettily dressed in white, carrying large bouquets of beautiful flowers, roses, sweet peas, mignonettes and other fragrant flowers, with which they bestrewed the long pathway by which the bride was to enter the church. Of all the happy souls in that gathering we must especially mention Lady Streetfield. It seemed to her as if the cycle of her efforts on behalf of Reginald had been completed as she gazed upon the sweet face of Veronica. She offered a silent prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving for all the many blessings vouchsafed Reginald. Nor must we forget Lady Travelyan and Amelia. Their countenances truly radiated the happiness and purity of their own souls.

The ceremony through, Reginald and his bride received the warm and hearty congratulations of those present, and Mr. Silas Thompson actually

had the temerity to claim a kiss from the bride, which was blushingly accorded him. So also did Mr. Albert Wilcox and Mr. George Wilcox and Captain Tom Brosby. The carriages were soon filled and away went the bridal party to the Manor, which was profusely, most tastefully and most wonderfully decorated with flowers for the occasion. Lady Travelyan and Amelia had taken upon themselves the duty of supervising the sumptuous wedding feast and the regaling of the guests. Of cheer there was ample and of the best. The day was a beautiful one, and outside on the far extended lawn were placed tastefully decorated tables, all loaded down with every conceivable variety of viands and wines. These were for the feasting of the tenantry and their friends.

Lady Travelyan had constituted Will Burke, Phil Knox, and Harry Brooks masters of ceremony for the outside festivities, and well did our three musketeers perform their part, good humoredly jesting with the grown-up folk and rollicking with the children, and imparting their own jovial spirits (which appeared to be irresistible) to the happy company. The Manor was thrown open, and ample accommodations were provided for all. There at the head of the long bridal table in the great dining hall, sat the bride with her husband to the right, and to her left sat her father and mother, and at the other end of the table, facing the bride and groom, sat Sir William, looking every inch a baronet, with Lady Streetfield to his right.

Oh, what a happy gathering to be sure! With not a shadow to be seen on the horizon, the auspices were, indeed, favorable. Then there was the Rev. Dr. Sharpe to ask a blessing upon all of them,

and so everything and everybody were in perfect accord and harmony.

Happy Reginald! Happy Veronica! You are soon to leave the festive board, and your joyous and feasting friends, leaving them to themselves, to continue their festivities, after you have been carried away, as rapidly as steam can carry you, to far-away bonny Scotland. There to spend midst the enchanting beauty of the softness of her heathered covered hills, your honeymoon, and may it be one of hallowed, blessed and unalloyed bliss.

And so they went, amid the joyous acclamations and glad cheers of the happy assembly. Most demonstrative, indeed, were the guests on the lawn, as they threw rice and old slippers at the bridal pair, for good luck, as they disappeared from view in a carriage drawn by a splendid span of horses. It is not our wish to follow all the festivities of that joyous occasion. The good things outside disappeared as if under the wand of a magician; and right merry did the gathering become. Soon a space was cleared, and dancing was inaugurated. And thus did all the tenants of Streetfield Manor, with their friends, dance and make merry. They broke up at a late hour that night, only to begin over again next day, and thus in *ye olde English style* was the merriment kept going for three days, until the oldest inhabitant of those parts had to confess that, even his memory was at fault, when he tried in vain to recall such a joyous occasion. The county gentry, too, assembled day after day for three whole days, and well might they have tried Lady Travelyan's ingenuity to provide for all that happy throng and to maintain her reputation of being one of the best entertainers in Lon-

don. The choicest of wines flowed like water, and right merry were the dancers and dancing, and in the meanwhile was Silas Thompson standing slightly apart deeply interested in all that was transpiring around him, and audibly saying to himself, "Well, well, Veronica! You are truly a beautiful woman! The loveliest that I have ever seen! What an unusually pretty and uncommon name, too! I must in future refer to you, Veronica, as the party of the second part, and as for you, Reginald Streetfield, you will ever be to me the party of the first part, and God bless you both, the party of the first and the party of the second part."

CHAPTER VIII

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD

Captain Brosby, having returned to his regimental station at Bath, the amusing and interesting personalities of Harry Brooks and Bill Burke disappeared from the retinue of Streetfield Manor. These gentlemen escorted three stalwart servants of that household back with them for enlistment into Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment.

Captain Brosby had arranged all the essential details for Reginald, as far as his military duties were concerned, and he, with George Wilcox, true to their promise, started on a junketing excursion with Mr. Silas Thompson, of which we shall not go into details, further than to say that Mr. Thompson was greatly delighted and edified with all he saw and heard. Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi had gone back to their home in London; while Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wilcox left for London, where they purposed to remain until Silas Thompson and George were prepared to return with them to Tennessee.

Sir William and Lady Streetfield were now alone. The excitement of all the festivities having died down, a depressing reaction and a sense of loneliness stole over them, notwithstanding the fact that Lady Travelyan and Amelia had been prevailed upon to prolong their stay at Streetfield Manor. Lady Streetfield strove to resist the feeling that had stolen insensibly over her, and moreover, she was troubled and apprehensive about the health of Sir William, who had brightened up wonderfully while the festivities were in progress; but,

since the house had become quiet again, it could be readily seen that he was by no means well. Lady Streetfield had talked over the matter with the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, and he advised the summoning of a London physician to consult with the local medical practitioner, who had so long and successfully taken care of Sir William's health. Lady Travelyan and Amelia, wth their vivacity and overflowing good-humor, succeeded, after a manner, in keeping up a semblance of cheer in the old Manor House.

The London physician had come and gone, and his opinion had deepened the gloom which had stolen over the spirit of Lady Streetfield. He expressed his opinion that Sir William's wonderful constitution, which had for so many years past successfully combated the ravages of the fell African fever, was now beginning to wane and that his hitherto strong constitution was breaking down, allowing the dire after-effects of that fever to assume a dangerous and alarming aspect, and that unless he could re-establish the domination of his hitherto wonderful constitution, the tenure of his life was very uncertain.

Under these circumstances, Lady Streetfield felt constrained to summon her son from the Highlands of Scotland, where, as stated in the preceding chapter, he with his bride were spending their honeymoon. Lady Streetfield purposely desisted from alarming Reginald, by simply stating, that his father had been far from well, and that perhaps it would be wise for him to come home.

When he received this letter, Reginald was greatly alarmed for he knew only too well that his mother would not, except under the most serious

apprehensions, have asked for his return. Veronica shared her husband's fears, and they hostened back by the fastest route possible. On arriving home, Sir William greeted his son and his daughter-in-law most tenderly. Reginald, no sooner had he seen his father, realized that Lady Streetfield's apprehensions were only too well founded. A great change had come over his father since he last saw him, and a sense of exhaustion and weakness would at stated intervals completely overtake Sir William, when his condition became really alarming; but he would rally again for a few hours, until taken with another attack.

Lady Streetfield was ever by his side, to anticipate his every little want; and he would lie sometimes, perhaps for half an hour or more, with half closed eyes, caressingly holding her hand. Sir William was a man of sound business principles; and he had all his affairs satisfactorily arranged, so that when he quietly and painlessly passed away within a few days there was little difficulty in having them adjusted.

The passing of this great soul threw Lady Streetfield into an abyss of despair and grief. Their lives had been of such unalloyed happiness and they were passionately attached to each other. At times, in the recent past, she would be often overwhelmed with the thought of the time when these same hours must come to her, those hours all through the livelong days, weeks, months and years, when she must exist alone, without the companionship of her beloved husband.

Reginald made every effort, in every possible way, to assuage the grief of his mother, and Veronica, with her wonderful tact and her sympa-

thetic affection which she had begun to share with Reginald for Lady Streetfield, succeeded in a large measure in averting a catastrophe, for Lady Streetfield was in danger of succumbing to the tremendous weight and poignancy of her sorrow.

It was a melancholy throng that came to pay their last respects to the Master of Streetfield. Barely a month had elapsed since that self-same throng had assembled in gladsome and joyous celebration at the wedding feast of Reginald and Veronica, and here the same people, and others besides, had come to pay their last tribute of respect to their friend and patron. As the Rev. Dr. Sharpe pronounced in a ringing tone those words, in his melodious and sonorous voice, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," a general sob seemed to convulse those present. And again, when the choir broke out into that superb anthem, which seems always to arouse in the listener the joys of a soul awakening in paradise, "I know that my Redeemer Liveth," then it was that the cup of anguish of all the assembled mourners seemed, indeed, to be filled to overflowing. A good man had died. There should be no reason for mourning and sorrow; an untarnished and an unblemished human soul had passed back to its Creator. Sir William lived as he was born, a true and good man. He was born with good and high instincts, and his early life was profoundly influenced by sound and good traditions, which thrust their roots down into ages long past, the truth and soundness of which have long been proved by the experience of generations of men.

Silas Thompson, who hastened from his trip (to the extreme east coast of England) to be present

at the funeral of the father of his friend Reginald, was greatly struck by the genuine emotion shown by the vast throng that attended the funeral; and the thought occurred to him that this good man, now dead, was a fair representative of a class which the demagogy contemptuously referred to as the squirarchy. This man, and all men of his class exercise a strong hold upon the imagination and affections of their tenants as well as upon the county gentry and the professional and trading classes. They hold this influence, Silas reasoned with himself, not to their possession of land and property, but to those ancient traditions that have descended from the feudal barons and the feudal lords. Those barons and lords were ever the first, to call their retainers to battle, and to place themselves at the head and front of the affray, thus encouraging their followers and instilling into them their own dauntless spirit and courage. If England, he thought, should ever have to experience a position wherein her national life would be in danger of extinction, these men, and the sons of these men, with their tenantry, and their peasants, would be the first to throw themselves into the fiery furnace of modern warfare, and would sacrifice their all—lands, money, position, life—everything, in the preservation of the life of England. They were worthy sons of worthy sires, who, for countless generations before them, he admitted to himself, were surrounded and loved and revered by their tenantry and their peasantry, the backbone of England's solidarity and stability.

The funeral over, many there were in that gathering who recounted the kindly and unostentatious acts of the departed master. One sturdy yeoman

related how the deceased master had come unsolicited to his aid at a time when troubles, too numerous to mention, had flocked down upon him and threatened to destroy his very means of livelihood; and how the good master, when hearing of his condition, came forward and pressed upon him the acceptance of a gift of two thousand pounds.

Another related how the master had, unasked, reduced his yearly rent to one-half during the time he was passing his son through college; and how when that son had taken his degree, Sir William had generously sent him a thousand-pound note to start him in life. So many there were, indeed, in that part of the county who owed everything to the solicitude and generosity of their benefactor, Sir William Streetfield.

The Streetfields had always regarded themselves in relation to their tenantry, as simply trustees, and they fully recognized the onus and responsibility of that trusteeship. Thus when we related how genuine was the outburst of sorrow that broke forth when the words, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," were given out, those people felt, and believed, that the dead before them was, indeed, blessed.

The funeral being over, and all matters of business pertaining to the succession of the estates and title being concluded, Captain Brosby and the new baronet, Sir Reginald Streetfield, conferred as to what had best be done. Sir Reginald was to join his regiment, which was in daily expectation of being ordered out to India on active service to the northwestern frontier of that country, where numerous devastating fanatical uprisings among the war-like hill tribes had now developed into a more

serious affair than at first anticipated. An expeditionary force was in process of being mobilized, and the redoubtable 110th was likely to form a unit of the force.

Lady Streetfield was to remain at Streetfield Manor, while that good-hearted Lady Travelyan and her no less kindly daughter, insisted that they remain for a few months at the Manor House to bear Lady Streetfield company, and to allay, as much as possible, her grief and loneliness. Sir Reginald and Captain Tom repaired to Bath, while Veronica elected to stay at the Manor with Lady Streetfield.

When the gallant Captain and Streetfield arrived at Bath, they found that the regiment had just received orders to proceed to Aldershot, prior to embarking at Portsmouth for India. It was only natural that this news would give Reginald no little concern, although it was not altogether unlooked for. To leave his newly wedded wife and his grief-stricken mother would be very harrowing but he was a soldier and when called by his country he must obey. His duty as a soldier had first claim upon him; besides he knew perfectly well that his mother and wife would be the very last to countenance the least dereliction of duty on his part. He did not, however, write and give them the news, as he purposed being back in Streetfield Manor in a few days. He feared the effect of writing, and of the news upon his mother in her present precarious state of health. The officers of the 110th were glad to see Reginald again. They were aware of the recent loss of his father, and they exerted themselves to make his duty and his sojourn among them as pleasant as possible.

The 110th foot infantry was commanded by Colonel Thomas Tomkins, a splendid example of a British soldier. Colonel Tom Tom, as he was familiarly called by his fellow officers and men, was a martinet so far as the discipline and training of his regiment were concerned; but outside of duty he was a large-hearted, generous, and kindly man. He had ever a willing ear for the troubles of any of his officers and men, family troubles, as he facetiously called them. He was an old bachelor and, although always gallant and chivalrous to the ladies, nevertheless, he prided himself upon avoiding the pit of matrimony, as he jestingly called it.

Colonel Tom Tom was a man six feet in height, well proportioned, but showing in recent years a tendency to stoutness. He was a man of abstemious habits, although he had been known on a few very special occasions to have departed from the straight and narrow way. The Colonel, too, was more than cordial in his welcome to Streetfield. He had known all about Captain Brosby's sister's marriage to Sir William Streetfield, and had been once taken to call upon Sir William at Streetfield Manor, by Captain Brosby, and had spent a few very enjoyable days shooting over the Streetfield preserves.

Colonel Tom Tom knew all about Reginald's joining the 110th Regiment. He had known about Reginald's recent marriage, and the sad and unfortunate loss of his father, occurring so shortly after his marriage, and had, unsolicited, told Reginald that he could have all the leave of absence he needed before they embarked on active service abroad; and, more than that, if that time proved not ample to arrange his affairs he would

see to it that Streetfield be given additional leave of absence and join his regiment a little later in India. This kind offer Reginald declined, but begged a few days leave of absence in the meantime.

The dowager Lady Streetfield was quite overcome when she heard that her son's regiment was ordered to India on active service, but she courageously accepted the situation.

"You are a soldier, my son, and a soldier must obey orders," she said to Reginald on hearing the news from him. "I am more sorry for Veronica, but I will be a mother to her, and we will at all times write to you; perhaps it may not be for very long after all, and Veronica can go out to you and perhaps, my dear son, I may occompany her for a short visit. I have always had a desire to visit India."

It was as much as Veronica could do, to keep from breaking down completely, but she was brave. "Was she not a soldier's wife?" she asked herself. Therefore, she must courageously face the ordeal; but she had passed through so many harrowing experiences—her sister's marriage, and her subsequent separation from her, and the death of her husband's father, following so soon after her marriage, and now this, to her, the greatest of all. Reginald had to leave her. It was hard to tell for how long, and he was going to war. It might be forever. War was uncertain, and no respecter of persons, and Reginald might never return. Every battle kills some soldier, and why should it not kill Reginald as well as another? These thoughts would surge through her mind, though she tried ever so hard to keep them back.

When in Reginald's company she assumed a bright and cheery attitude. "It does not matter, it will not be for long, I know. I shall soon be coming out to you, and maybe, to give you an additional surprise, bring your mother out with me; so cheer up, you darling boy, and let us all be merry and happy as we can, while you are still with us," she would say to him.

Sir Reginald and Veronica went down to London in order to bid the parents of Veronica good-bye before he embarked. The good old folk took the news very complacently. They knew, they said, that a soldier had his duty to perform, and there was nothing to be gained by fretting. If everybody took it to heart when a soldier was ordered away to war, the country would be in the most unenviable position. "The wives," continued the old Bonapartist, "of the soldiers of the great Napoleon always rejoiced to see their husbands march away to victory, for those wives argued, that staying at home would not win for their husbands a marshal's baton."

Veronica promised her parents that she would spend her days, while Reginald was away on active service, equally between London and Streetfield Manor. Finally the day arrived and Lieutenant Sir Reginald Streetfield embarked from Portsmouth with his regiment for India, after bidding farewell to his wife, mother, and to his friends, George Wilcox, Grace, and their parents, and dear old Silas Thompson. All these kind friends had elected to stay in England until Sir Reginald sailed. This expression of so kindly a feeling on their part greatly affected Sir Reginald. The Wilcoxes were to have been the guests of Lady

Travelyan in London for a time, but the untimely death of Sir William Streetfield and the precarious condition of the dowager Lady Streetfield induced that kind lady to alter her plans and stay a while at Streetfield Manor, in order to be of some service, as she said, to Lady Streetfield. The Wilcoxes, under these altered circumstances, decided to accompany Silas Thompson, whenever possible, on his numerous sight-seeing tours, until Reginald departed for India. That event having taken place, they left England, and sailed for home.

Sir Reginald threw himself with ardor into his duties, as a counterpoise to his own sad thoughts, so much so that he received the commendations of his major and adjutant, and even of his Colonel.

"That young man will be a credit to the service," Colonel Tom Tom once remarked to Captain Brosby. "It is sad, however, that he had to leave his young wife behind him. We must do something for them, Brosby, when we get through this campaign, which I think will not last longer than six months. I will arrange to have Lady Streetfield out with us. She will be an acquisition to the cantonment. I hear she is talented and a very gracious and charming young woman."

After an uneventful voyage, the 110th disembarked at Bombay, and entrained for the northwest frontier. The many interesting and novel scenes that presented themselves to Reginald, the interesting buildings that he visited as the opportunity occurred, and the whole antithesis of eastern civilization as compared to western, so absorbed Reginald's leisure moments that they contributed in a large measure to keep him from con-

stantly dwelling upon his wife, mother and home.

They passed over the western Ghauts, as the mountains that line the western coast of India are called, and over the plains and mountains of central India, passing through scenes of great natural beauty.

Reginald had received many letters from his wife and mother, and from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, who had promised to write to him at regular intervals. You may be sure he answered all these letters with compound interest, relating many of the novel and interesting scenes and experiences that he had passed through.

The 110th finally joined the expeditionary forces at Peshawa in the extreme west of the Punjab where it was in the process of formation. This force consisted of ten thousand infantry—three British regiments and seven Sepoy or native Indian regiments—four squadrons of cavalry and several batteries of artillery with machine gun complements, and in addition to these, the transport and the army medical services. The whole force amounted to about sixteen thousand men. From Peshawa this force moved forward in sections, towards those lofty peaks that guard the gateway of India, the Hindu-Kush Mountains.

The fertile valleys of these mountains are inhabited by the most fierce, warlike, treacherous and intractable tribes to be found anywhere in the world. They disregarded treaty obligations on the slightest pretext and would suddenly mobilize their forces and spring without warning, in overwhelming numbers, upon those isolated garrisons left on the extreme confines of India to guard the frontier. The British garrisons were compelled

to remain ever on guard against such treacherous onslaughts, being in many instances unable to venture safely outside the range of their own guns.

On this occasion the uprising had assumed a sinister aspect, as many of the Pathan sepoys of the British forces had deserted to the Afridis, as these tribes were called, and had instructed them in military discipline and evolution. These tribes also secured by some means quick-firing rifles and machine guns, and even artillery. The number known to be armed was estimated to be over twenty-five thousand men. Against this formidable number, the British government of India determined to take no risks, and an expeditionary force of sixteen thousand men was to be sent in the field against them to crush permanently, if possible, their resistance. We shall leave Sir Reginald Streetfield with his regiment for a while, and retrace our steps to England.

The Wilcoxes and Silas Thompson had left England for America, as we have already stated, and Phil Knox had accompanied them. George Wilcox, however, stayed behind, as he contemplated a trip to Vienna to see Dr. J. Douglas Vernon. He purposed killing two birds with one stone; he was desirous of seeing something of the rest of the continent of Europe, and also at the same time to pay a visit to Dr. Vernon, for whom he entertained a very high respect. By some decree of fate young Wilcox decided to go to Vienna via Paris, and while there he chanced to meet Monsieur Alphonso Laudet.

Monsieur Laudet was debonair and gracious as ever. He apologized most profusely to George for

what happened in the Chateau d'Eaulant, and by his consummate gift of dissimulation he succeeded in making Mr. George Wilcox believe that he was a most unfortunate man, and had to suffer a vicarious atonement for those rascally French officers of the African Guards, who had plotted, he said, most skillfully to disposess those two young English-speaking gentlemen of their winnings. So cleverly did he explain away his conduct in that transaction that Wilcox felt like severely censuring himself for doing Monsieur Laudet so grave an injustice. Once having suceeded in getting Wilcox in this self-accusing frame of mind, it was comparatively easy for Monsieur Laudet to regain his ascendancy over him.

Unfortunate George, always good, generous, and kind, went like a moth to the flame. It was not long before he was with the gayest, the fastest, and the most disreputable set in Paris. To add to his troubles, he, who had never shown any pronounced taste for strong wines and spirits, although he was by no means a total abstainer, began to develop a decided taste for strong wines, and particularly absinthe, to which drink he almost exclusively confined himself. Being plentifully supplied with money, George was always a welcome guest at those tables where the stakes ran high. He was easily flattered and cajoled by Laudet and his shrewd companions. Laudet often won from him, and even did not hesitate to borrow large sums from him. Wilcox had to call upon his London bankers for larger drafts for money from home, until his father began to wonder what in the world George needed with such large sums.

Mr. Wilcox senior, was a wealthy man, as

wealthy men were considered in America in those days, his wealth may have totaled a million dollars, or nearly two hundred thousand pounds. But his wealth lay largely in farm lands and plantations, and his command of ready money was therefore limited, so that when George's frequent drafts were presented to him for payment, in amounts often of ten, fifteen or even twenty thousand dollars, he naturally became alarmed. He had written to George on the matter, but he had replied quite evasively and unsatisfactorily. Mr. Wilcox became genuinely alarmed, and wrote to Dr. Vernon in Vienna enclosing such funds as he thought would be ample, and begged him to proceed immediately to Paris, and see George and ascertain from him the reason of his spending such great sums. This, accordingly, Dr. Vernon did.

On arriving at Paris, it did not take him long to trace George's whereabouts, as he was fairly accurately instructed by pere Wilcox.

Dr. Vernon found George installed in a sumptuous suite in one of the most fashionable apartments in Paris, living there in all the luxurious wanton of a fast Parisian life. After running the gauntlet of a gate-keeper, a watchman and a porter, Dr. Vernon finally managed to arrive at the suite that was occupied by Wilcox. On ringing the bell, he was ushered into a handsomely furnished ante-chamber, by a prettily attired French maid, who asked his name, and the purpose of his visit. Dr. Vernon, not being very conversant with French, handed the maid his card and said in his best French, "This is for Monsieur Wilcox." The maid courtesied prettily, and withdrew, closing the inner door of the ante-chamber, after saying something

in French, which he did not understand; but he presumed it to mean that he was to stay where he was.

Presently the maid returned, and beckoned the doctor to follow her. She led him through another wide hall, and again through an elaborately furnished dining room, then passing into what appeared to Dr. Vernon to be another ante-chamber, she opened a door which led into another room of ample proportions. This room, he saw at a glance, was luxuriously furnished, with huge, costly mirrors lining the walls. Massive mahogany couches and immense easy chairs, all upholstered in the choicest of embossed leather, were placed here and there. Costly bric-a-brac on handsome brackets attached to the walls could be seen all around the room, and others, more rare, were enclosed in glass cabinets.

Almost embedded in one of these luxurious chairs, in a semi-recumbent posture, was George. He arose languidly when Vernon entered and, extending his hand, in an unusually languid manner, he shook hands with the doctor, and said in a drawling monotone, quite in keeping with his actions, "Glad to see you, Doctor, but how in heaven's name did you get here?"

"Being in Paris for a few days, just thought I would look you up," replied the doctor as he heartily seized George's outstretched hand, and gave it a vigorous shake, to which George but feebly responded, and winced at the doctor's hearty grasp. Dr. Vernon noticed that George's hand was cold and clammy; it almost gave him *pes anserine*,

that is, goose-flesh, as he said afterwards, when relating the incident to Wilcox senior.

"You are looking remarkably well, Vernon," said Wilcox.

"Thanks, George, but I cannot say the same of you. You were in splendid form, when I dismissed you cured," responded the doctor. "What the deuce have you been doing to yourself?"

"Nothing, nothing out of the way, Vernon, I assure you. I presume Parisian life does take out of a fellow."

Doctor Vernon formed a hasty opinion and a tentative diagnosis of his friend's case. George's complexion was of a transparent white, while his eyes were languid, drooping and lusterless, like the dead ashes of a fire. His cheeks were slightly sunken, and his whole manner lackadaisical. He had undergone a complete transformation. He sat quite still, apparently satisfied with himself, while a smile of self-appreciation spread over his countenance.

"A fast Parisian life, you know, doctor, will leave its mark. I may as well make an open confession as not, but how came you here? Not on your own volition, I am sure. Be candid. I have confessed, you do the same. My dad commissioned you to look me up, did he not?"

"Why yes, Wilcox, you might as well know now as later. I received a letter from your father in Vienna, asking me to look you up. What has gone wrong with you? Something has, that is quite obvious," answered the doctor.

"The old gentleman has been apprehensive for some time about me. You see, Vernon, it is darned expensive living in Paris and I have been drawing

rather freely on him lately. I think he begins to smell a rat, and I must confess that I have not kept up my correspondence as I should have done. I have letters upon letters from mother and Grace, only a tithe of which I have answered. So the old man sent you to see what I was doing in Paris. I have not committed matrimony. Perhaps he was afraid of that."

All this George Wilcox said in a most impersonal and inanimate way, as if he were speaking entirely of somebody else. He appeared to be incapable of emotion, as he limply sank in his chair.

"What shall I say to him, George? Shall I write and tell him you are O. K., and will soon be home again, or shall I describe conditions as I find them, and as you have related them to me?"

"Anything but the latter, anything but the latter, Vernon. Tell him that you are investigating. Give me a little time to pull myself together again. I know that I cannot go on like this. This and better may do, but this and worse will be the end of me. You will have to help me out again, doctor. This is not a disease of the body but of the mind. I am beginning to feel frightfully depressed. It is all so sudden, Vernon. Your coming upon me like this. I will ask the maid to bring us something. Please press the button there on the table beside you," said George in a languid way.

"Nothing for me, I thank you, Wilcox. If you want the maid you must do the pressing of the button yourself. I shall have to be shown that you really mean to pull yourself together," rejoined the doctor with decided emphasis.

"Come, come, old man. You need not get crusty," said George, arising and pressing the but-

ton. "Wait and see the transformation after I have had some absinthe."

"Absinthe, George? You have surely not taken to drinking that stuff, I hope. You surely know where that will lead you to," replied Dr. Vernon, anxiously.

Just then the maid arrived. She seemed to have known what was needed, for she brought in glasses with a decanter.

"It is not what it will do to me, doctor. It is what it has already done. Please observe the effect it will have on me. You will hardly know me in two or three minutes."

Dr. Vernon looked on, unable to say a word, so nonplussed was he with the strange metamorphosis of George Wilcox. This inanimate listless being, the Wilcox he had left so vigorously well just a few short months ago. It seemed unreal, and altogether impossible.

He poured out a glass from the decanter full to the brim and began sipping it leisurely, in complete silence, while Dr. Vernon sat by much interested in the scene. After he had consumed the liquor thus slowly, he lay back in the chair. In a few moments Dr. Vernon, who was closely watching him, observed a bright hectic flush lighting up the death-like pallor of his cheeks, and his eyes seemed to open widely and sparkled brilliantly. His features began to assume an animated and bright expression, and a happy smile radiated over his countenance. The metamorphosis was complete.

'Wait until you see Laudet, Vernon;" and, addressing the maid in French, George said to her,

"Please ask Monsieur Laudet to step in," and addressing Vernon, continued.

"Laudet will be here in a minute, doctor. I want you to meet him. He is the grandest fellow in the world. You will think so when you meet him. He has been a true and kind friend to me, Vernon, and has helped me out of a number of scrapes, I assure you, and has on more than one occasion replenished my banking account; great is Laudet."

All this George said with surprising animation and emphasis, a complete contrast to his languor before taking the absinthe. His eyes gleamed like two pieces of live coal. He appeared to have recovered all the elasticity of body which a moment before he had lacked. In a few moments, the maid rapped at the door and opening it, announced Monsieur Laudet.

"Ah Monsieur Laudet, *mon bon ami.* I have sent for you to meet my old and trusted friend and physician, Dr. Vernon of Great Hope, Tennessee. He has been deputed by my revered and anxious father to look after his wayward son. I have just been telling him what a good friend I have found in you. Shake hands with Dr. Vernon, Laudet."

"I am sure I am most pleased to meet any friend of Mr. Wilcox," said Laudet in his most cordial and mellifluous tone.

Dr. Vernon made a quick mental survey of Monsieur Laudet as he stood up to shake hands with him, and he could not but admit to himself that he had a very hard task before him in weaning George away from his charming companion, and from his present environments, and the seductive life he was leading. He felt that his ingenuity

would be taxed to the utmost, and for this he had to be prepared. He decided then and there to practice all the dissimulation that he could possibly bring to bear upon the situation. Laudet helped himself to a glass of absinthe from the decanter.

"You will have a glass of absinthe, will you not, *Monsieur le docteur?*" said Laudet. "It is really the only drink a man of intellect should indulge in."

"No, thank you, Monsieur Laudet. I do not mind, however, having a glass of claret," replied Dr. Vernon.

"Good for you Vernon. Please press that button behind you, Laudet, for Marie," said George. Presently Marie appeared, and Wilcox ordered her to bring in a decanter of claret, and when she arrived with the decanter, Wilcox poured the doctor out a glass, saying, "We must contrive to make your stay in Paris as pleasant and enjoyable as possible."

"How long does *Monsieur le docteur* stay?" asked Laudet.

"My time is my own. I may stay a few days, until I tire of the pleasures of the city," replied Vernon.

"Then you will lunch with Wilcox and myself. We must do the honors of Gai Paree," said Laudet.

"I am sure I have much pleasure in accepting your kind invitation and placing myself in your hands, Monsieur Laudet. My friend Wilcox tells me that you have proved your friendship to him on more than one occasion," answered the doctor.

"Mr. Wilcox pays me too great an honor, but I will always stay with a friend," said Laudet, map-

ping out a programme for the rest of the day, in the most charmingly ingenuous manner. He recounted some of the amusing incidents that had occurred to Mr. Wilcox and himself, always, however, placing Wilcox in the best of light, and to the greatest advantage. Laudet tried to appear at his best before the doctor, and he certainly succeeded. His charm of manner, apparent frankness, and his inexhaustible fund of humor were not lost on Dr. Vernon, who felt more than ever convinced that his first estimate as to the difficulty of the task he had in hand was not overrated. Presently Laudet rose to go, after making an appointment with George and the doctor to meet them at lunch at a certain fashionable restaurant.

After Laudet's departure, George said, "There, doctor, is the most fashionable and popular man in Paris. He knows everybody, and goes everywhere. I should have been quite lost in Paris without him. He has been my sheet anchor in this city."

'Indeed," rejoined Vernon laconically, thinking at the same time that if George had not met Laudet at all, he would not be in his present deplorable condition. That was neither here nor there, however; the problem to be faced, was, how to extricate Wilcox from his dangerous position.

It is not a part of the narrative to follow Dr. Vernon in all the intricacies and ramifications of Parisian life that he was compelled to follow in his efforts to keep in constant touch with George Wilcox. On one occasion he had joined Laudet and George and a party of their friends at a dinner given by one of the boon companions of Monsieur Laudet. After dinner a game of cards was

proposed, and, as Dr. Vernon had not come prepared to play for high stakes, George forced him to accept a loan of five one-thousand franc bills, and as the doctor felt that he was gradually but surely gaining an ascendancy over George, he thought it politic to accept the loan.

After he had been playing for a while, luck seemed to come his way, and did not desert him for the rest of the evening; and, as the stakes were high, he found himself at the end of the night's session, twenty thousand francs to the good.

The members of that party insisted that Dr. Vernon give them their revenge, and urged, both by George and Laudet, he found himself in a position in which he could not well refuse. He even offered to return all his winnings, but this apparently caused some affront, so he was constrained to meet them again the following night but one. Laudet and Wilcox arranged to have the party meet at their apartment.

Dr. Vernon found that after giving George back his five thousand francs, he had twenty thousand francs to fall back upon.

The dinner was a most sumptuous and elaborate affair. Dr. Vernon seldom ventured beyond the lightest kinds of wine, not that he was by any means prejudiced against alcoholic beverages. He was willing to concede the truth of the old Scottish adage, "Every man knows, his *own know* best," and as every man has been endowed by his Creator, he contended, with sense enough to know *his own know*, in regard to the taking of alcoholic beverages, and that when men failed to be rational, it was usually owing to some physical defect or weakness, or to some moral defect in their

character, that the most morally developed man was he who was not only able to boldly face temptation, but also to resist, and overcome it. He was not a believer in the *cotton-pad variety of man.* This was an expression of his own. To him a *cotton-pad man* was one who had to be wrapped in cotton wadding like a premature infant, to be protected even from the slightest movement of the air around him. So also his moral nature had to be thickly padded and artificially protected, lest he should by any chance suffer a moral lapse. Dr. Vernon had one great maxim in life, which had always been an inspiration to him and a touchstone of his career, and this had by no means been an easy one. His parents, as we have stated before, being left indigent after the war of secession, young James Douglas Vernon had had to battle every step of his way all through his preparation for his life's work. His maxim, therefore, was particularly *apropos.* "Dare to be a Daniel." Dare even to venture into the lion's den. Go into the world fearlessly, and learn to govern yourself. The world, he argued, is better off for having strong men, who have battled with temptations, and have overcome them, than to have a world peopled by those who have so *packed themselves in cotton* in order to be protected from even the slightest breath of temptation.

The rest of the party indulged in brandy and absinthe, which seemed to be their favorite tipple. Fortune again smiled upon Dr. Vernon, and he arose from the table in the small hours of the morning fifteen thousand francs richer than when he sat down. In the meanwhile, he never lost an opportunity of bringing home to George Wilcox

the danger of the course he was pursuing, especially in the matter of absinthe drinking, and he urged him to maintain some check upon himself.

The doctor had confidentially written to George's father, in Tennessee, giving him all the facts of the case, and pointed out to him that George's position was so perilous and difficult to deal with that he found that being single handed he was powerless to cope with it. He urged upon Mr. Wilcox to hasten to Paris. And the doctor patiently awaited his arrival.

The thirty-five thousand francs that Dr. Vernon had won he passed over to George, to prevent him drawing still further upon his father, or from borrowing money from Laudet.

It was not long before Mr. Wilcox Senior arrived in Paris, accompanied by Phil Knox, who had taken service under him since his return to America. The doctor and Mr. Wilcox Senior had a long and serious conference as to George's precarious position and the means to be adopted to extricate him. At this time fortune favored them, through the instrumentality of Josephine.

For some time past Josephine had been urging upon her husband the desirability of going back to London. She had known of Veronica's marriage, and she had an irrepressible longing to be reconciled to her family. Laudet could not well refuse her as he had observed that she was beginning to show the effects of this ungratified and natural yearning; and then he had been so long absent from his diplomatic post, on one excuse or another, that his government had at length peremptorily asked for his resignation, or his return

to his post. Besides this, he had been extremely lucky in his gaming ventures, and had been able to put by a considerable sum of money. Taking one thing with another, all matters seemed to point to his return to London. When he learned that George's father had arrived in Paris for the express purpose of taking his son home with him, he resolved, with his usual acumen, to make a virtue of a necessity, and arranged a meeting with Mr. Wilcox Senior, and Dr. Vernon. At this meeting he assured George's father that he would use his best endeavors to prevail upon his son to return with him to Tennessee, not revealing, however, the main reason for his doing so, namely, that he himself, had decided to return to his post in London.

It was plain that Mr. Wilcox Senior was greatly taken with the genial affability, the apparent kindness and the charm of manner of the young Frenchman, and he could hardly bring himself to believe that apparently so cultured a gentleman should have such an evil influence upon his son. Thus it happened that George readily went back with his father to Tennessee, when he learned Monsieur Laudet purposed returning to his post in London, and Dr. Vernon left for Vienna to resume his studies there.

It was indeed a heart-breaking experience for Mrs. Wilcox and Grace to see the wreck of that fine young man in whom they had all taken such a joy and pride.

As for Miss Emily Lawrence, she seemed to have experienced a revulsion of feeling and avoided meeting George as much as possible. He would remain quite well behaved for short periods of

time, and then he would disappear and would be found later at New York, Philadelphia, or Washington, and even as far away as New Orleans. Here he would be found in a state of wild dissipation. Mr. Wilcox had restricted his son's use of his money, but he was constrained to meet and honor the many doubtful obligations that George from time to time would incur, to save him from the dire consequences of his acts and his own name from disgrace.

George Wilcox was a wreck of his former self, and the villagers of Great Hope would cast pitying glances at him on those rare occasions when he visited the village, remembering—many of them with sadness—the bright, vigorous and promising young man they knew so well, only a short time before.

To return to Laudet. He did not appear at all affected and remained apparently untouched, both mentally and physically by those demoralizing influences that surrounded him. His self-possession never deserted him, for he still exercised a perfect mastery over himself. He had been, in a manner, the cause of the ruin of dozens of promising young lives, yet he passed through all unscathed.

To his wife he was ever considerate and even kind. He lavished a large proportion of his ill-gotten gains upon her comforts and he surrounded her with all the luxuries that money could buy, of which he usually appeared to have a super-abundance. After the explanation he had given Josephine, of which we have spoken in a previous chapter, she had never questioned him as to his coming or going. He would be away for lengthy peri-

ods, and then again he would stay at home for a long time, apparently quite happy and contented in the society of his wife. Josephine lived in the town of Antinil, about forty miles from Paris, so Laudet was able to go in and out of Paris with facility.

He seldom took his wife to Paris, and then only on those days when he knew that his boon companions were otherwise engaged. Monsieur Laudet, as we have stated before, had gained a complete mastery over Josephine, and his every wish would take the form of a command to her. He was conscious of the strong influence he exercised over his wife. He began to question himself whether or not it partook of the nature of hypnotism. One day, to satisfy himself, he tried an experiment with her. While casually talking to Josephine, he suddenly and abruptly said to her, "Look at me, look at me, Josephine," and as Josephine looked up at him, he caught her eyes fixed immovably upon him. Laudet then passed his hands over her eyes, and found, as he expected, that he had an hypnotic influence over his wife.

To further carry out his experiment, he said to her, "Josephine, tomorrow at noon, I am going to have some friends come home with me to lunch. I will bring what is necessary in the way of food and wine from the city, but you must prepare the table for six of us. You will stay of course and have lunch with us, and you must look your best."

Having said this, he passed his hands over Josephine's eyes, and said, "Wake up, Josephine."

Josephine gradually opened her eyes, and, rubbing them, said, "Surely I have been asleep, Alphonso. I feel so strange."

"You are only tired, my love," replied Alphonso. "You have been busying yourself too much with your household duties."

"I do not think it is that, Alphonso, I have been anything but busy this morning," answered Josephine.

"Anyhow, go and lie down, my adored one. A little sleep will put you all right again," urged her husband.

The next day at noon, Josephine, to the surprise of her servants, ordered the table to be tastefully set for six persons, and she arrayed herself in her most becoming afternoon gown.

Laudet, true to his saying, turned up promptly with ample hampers of food and several bottles of excellent wine. He was pleased to see that his suggestions had been acted upon. To test his wife further, he said to her, aside, after he had introduced his four friends, who were, however, legitimate business acquaintances of his, "How came my Josephine to know that I was to bring home four of my business friends to lunch, and that I also wanted to have her present?"

To this Josephine could give no explanations, beyond saying that she was unconsciously impelled to do what she had done. The four friends he had brought home with him were four highly reputable men, with whom he occasionally transacted business.

To do Laudet justice, he had never introduced to his wife a single rollicking companion, nor did any of these ever know or even suspect, not even George Wilcox, that Monsieur Laudet had a wife.

On being ordered to London, Monsieur Laudet gave up his residence in France, and disposed of

such goods and chattels he did not wish to transport there. He purposed leading the quiet and respectable life of an attache to the diplomatic corps of his country. He had, as we have stated, largely recouped his fortune at the gaming tables of Paris, and was to an extent tired of the strenuous and uncertain life he had been leading. He elected to settle down to a quiet life in London, and to aid Josephine to the best of his capability in bringing about a reconciliation between themselves and her family. He was in his own way devoted to her, and he well knew that Josephine was fretting herself ill over her separation from her parents and sister.

Laudet secured a fairly pretentious house in a fashionable district of London, and settled down, as he said to Josephine, to lead a godly, a sober, and a righteous life.

One of the first matters that he attended to was to institute inquiries about Monsieur Dieulafoi, his father-in-law, and he learned that the fiery Frenchman had been very feeble of late, and that he was in fact failing fast.

Josephine and himself had learned from Mr. Wilcox that Veronica had married Reginald Streetfield, and further, that Reginald had been ordered out to India on active service, without his revealing to George, that he, himself was married to a sister of Streetfield's wife, or, indeed, that he was married at all.

Monsieur Laudet contrived to meet Veronica on the street one day, not far from her home, where he had placed himself in the hope of such an event happening.

As for Veronica, she was entirely ignorant of

the black character of her brother-in-law, Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, and knew him only as Josephine's husband. She greeted him in a quiet cordial manner and inquired after her sister affectionately. Monsieur Laudet in his turn congratulated Veronica upon her marriage, and wished her good luck. He then entered upon a long dissertation as to the wretchedness and distress of Josephine, owing to the action of her family, in so long ignoring her and entirely discarding her, saying that they had come back to London in the hope of affecting a reconciliation.

Veronica's heart was now torn by two great and conflicting affections and influences. The intense love she bore her twin sister, and the fear of breaking her oath to her father, and her deep affection for her parents. The great love she bore her sister, however, prevailed over the dread of a broken oath. She arranged with Laudet to meet him again at the same place next day.

Veronica was now fully determined, at all hazards, to bring about a reconciliation between her parents and Josephine. She felt assured that in respect to her mother, it would be an easy task, but with the obstinate and fiery old Bonapartist, it would be a very difficult undertaking.

On arriving home that night, she found that her father had been taken suddenly ill. She was aware that it would imperil his life should she in his present state of health broach a subject which would without doubt throw him into a paroxysm of rage that may prove fatal. She took her mother, however, into her confidence and told her of her meeting with Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, and

also that Josephine was living in London, for the purpose of reconciling herself to them.

The heart of Madame Dieulafoi, too, was torn with conflicting emotions, but, as in the case of Veronica, her love for Josephine overcame all other considerations. But all the plans and the subterfuges they had thought out between them, to bring about a reconciliation between her father and Josephine, were to prove of no purpose.

The old Bonapartist began to develop very grave symptoms, which their medical attendant said would be apt to end fatally within the next few days.

Veronica and her mother kept a constant vigil at the bedside of the sick man. Now he was in the Italian campaign in the battle of Solferino, then again, he was in the thick of the fight at Gravelotte. The old man's mind wandered back to the scenes of his youth. He seemed to be unconscious of his present environments, although at times he would fix his eyes on his wife and then on Veronica, and smile upon them pleasantly, and ask them how they were, and ask whether or not he himself was very much out of his mind.

Madame Dieulafoi and Veronica concluded that it was best to have Josephine in the house, in case her father might call for her before he died.

As for Josephine, the joy of her reunion with her mother and her sister almost overcame her, especially under the circumstances of her father's lethal illness, and she longed to be reconciled to him before he died. She would stand at the door of his room and gaze on him as he wandered in his mind. She was shocked to see the change that had come over the stalwart man since last she saw him.

Then he was a man vigorous and hearty, and in his early fifties.

Josephine was to have her wish granted. Monsieur Dieulafoi in one of his lucid intervals said to Veronica: "Where is your sister ,do you know?"

"Yes, father, I do," replied Veronica, trembling in anticipation as to what must follow.

"I want to see my Josephine before I die. I know I am going to die, Veronica. My poor Josephine. Bring her to me, Veronica."

Then again would the distressed patient's mind wander, and in a few moments it would clear and he was himself again. Looking around the room, and failing to see Veronica, he asked his wife, "Where is Veronica?"

"She has just stepped out, my Edmund," replied his wife.

"Will you bring her to me?" demanded Monsieur Dieulafoi.

Madame Dieulafoi, going to the door, called gently to her daughter, "Your father is needing you Veronica."

On Veronica's reaching the bedside of her father, he said to her, "Have you brought Josephine?"

"Yes dear father," replied Veronica.

"Will you bring Josephine to me?" pleaded the father.

"Yes father, dear," replied Veronica, filled now with joy; she went out and led in Josephine by the hand, saying to her father, as they approached his bedside, "Here is Josephine."

"Oh, is that you, my Josephine?" eagerly asked the rugged old Bonapartist, gazing long and earnestly at Josephine, who had seated herself on the

edge of his bed, and reaching out she gently drew a hand of his between both of hers, and affectionately caressed and kissed it.

"Come here, my child, and lay your face against mine. Your father has been harsh to you. You will forgive him, will you not, my Josephine?"

"Oh father, father, I have nothing to forgive. I should never have left you as I did. It is I, father, who have come to you to ask you to forgive me."

"My poor Josephine. How you must have suffered all this long time. Is that rascally republican kind and gentle to my Josephine? Come nearer to your father, child, and say you forgive him. There, thank you. You are a dear girl, as dear as your sister Veronica. Where is she? Where is Veronica? Oh, you are there? Come to my other side, Veronica, and do you kiss me as your sister Josephine. I deprived you, Veronica, of a sister. For that I ask your forgiveness. Keep her now, and cherish her. Oh, that rascally republican, to have taken her away from us!" Then the old man wandered off again.

Again he plunged into desperate battles, and he would shout loudly, *"Vive l'empereur, Vive l'empereur,"* over and over again, and finally exhausted, he would fall into a brief slumber.

Thus his sickness continued. For the last two days he had hardly been lucid. The medical attendant could do but little to assuage the distress of his restless spirit. On the last day of his life, he seemed to have regained his usual clearness of mind. He called Madame Dieulafoi to his side, and spoke to her of matters regarding his estates, which he had been striving for some time to have

restored to him in France, and expressed a wish that he be buried in France.

Having concluded his instructions to Madame Dieulafoi, he asked for Veronica and Josephine, and requested them to sit beside him, one on each side of the bed, and to kiss him, one on each cheek.

"One last request your father asks of you both," he said to them with great earnestness. "Both of you please go now to the piano and play for your father *The Great Napoleon's Grand Battle March.* Play it, my children, as you used to play it, in those old days before Josephine went away, and as they played it in my regiment. Look well to your mother when I am gone. Good-bye, my two girls, you my Veronica, and you my Josephine. Go and play, as your father bids you. Kiss me once again, before you go."

The two girls kissed their father as he desired, in the same manner as they did before, and then went into the drawing room, and opened the piano widely, so that the notes could readily be heard in the sick man's room, and no sound be lost to the dying warrior. They began playing *The Grand Battle March of the Great Napoleon,* which had so often thrilled multitudes.

Veronica and Josephine played as they never played before. It was the dying request of their father.

As the sublime sounds of that duet penetrated his room, the gnarled warrior sat upright in bed, an effort he had not made for days, enthralled, with the stirring and inspiring sounds of the Grand Old March. His gaze became fixed, his eyelids widely opened, as to show the white above the pupils, which were dilated and his eyeballs

staring, as if too large for their sockets. His mouth was tightly drawn. His breath was slow and deep. His nostrils were distended and his whole countenance seemed to radiate the glow kindled within his soul. His fixed eyes never relaxed their gaze, as if looking into something far off and vainly striving to discern it in the distance.

Madame Dieulafoi supported him with an arm across his shoulders, in this transfiguration.

Suddenly, with a wonderful volume of sound, the piano gave forth a flourish as if it were indeed the blare of a thousand trumpets heralding a glorious victory.

The duet came to an end.

The old warrior's countenance relaxed. His eyes lost their fixed and staring look. He recognized his wife who was supporting him. He threw one arm around her, and the other he lifted high above his head, shouting loudly as he vigorously waved it, *"Vive l'epmereur! Vive l'empereur!"* Suddenly his whole body relaxed, his arms dropped to his sides, and he fell back a *corpse*.

CHAPTER IX

IRISH VALOR AND THE VICTORIA CROSS IN INDIA

We shall have to carry our readers back with us to the little and inconsequential village of Great Hope. We have left there certain very interesting personages, whose acquaintance we have made in our earlier chapters. One of the items of interest which gave the town food for speculation and gossip for some days was the noteworthy news that Attorney Silas Thompson was contemplating a trip to Europe, and for no less a purpose than to be present at the celebration of the nuptials of their quondam visitor, Mr. Reginald Streetfield.

When Dr. J. Douglas Vernon gave up his practice to accompany Mr. George Wilcox abroad, where Dr. Vernon expected to remain for some time to further his studies along certain highly specialized lines, and still more particularly when Phil Knox was chosen to accompany those two gentlemen, those items caused no little stir, and aroused no little interest in the quiet precincts of Great Hope, and among the neighboring folk but the wildest stretch of imagination of those natives could not have conceived Mr. Silas Thompson taking a trip to Europe and taking it, too, for the purpose of being present at the fashionable wedding celebration of a British aristocrat. The various reasons given and the various theories propounded upon this extraordinary proceeding upon the part of Silas Thompson by these näive vil-

lagers and mountain folk would make a quaint and respectable sized volume.

If Silas Thompson had been questioned once, he had been questioned several times, and any inhabitant of Great Hope, who had failed to question Mr. Silas Thompson as to his contemplated journey, should he happened to have met him, was to be looked upon as a man not endowed with that modicum of intelligence which an all-wise Creator has given to each one of the human race. The questions put to Mr. Silas Thompson were all of the same tenor with but little variation, "Say, Silas, I hear you are going to Europe. Well, well, who would have dreamed it?" "When may you be starting, Mr. Thompson?" "Ever cross the water before, Silas?" "How do you like crossing the water, Si? I reckon you are not taken with that part of it, Silas?" Then another who was accounted the village sage said to him:

"Why, Silas, I said to my missus early this morning, says I, 'what with Dr. Vernon leaving for Europe, and Phil Knox, and now there is Mr. Silar Thompson leaving,' I said to her, 'maybe, missus, it will be my turn next.' My missus, she comes back at me, and says, 'It would be no such luck for me, Jake, I am not that lucky, like that there little Phil Knox's wife.' My old girl, she has some sense of humor. You can just reckon she has, although you would not believe it if you see her."

To all these questions Silas Thompson answered good naturedly, and generally in the same way, "I am going to Europe. "I am starting in a few days." "I have never crossed the ocean before, I reckon I shall like the sea trip." "I reckon it is so." "One can never tell what may happen."

"Maybe I shall be gone for three months. Now you folks must behave yourselves while I am away, there will be nobody here to get you out of trouble. I should hate to see any of you in State's prison when I get back."

One old settler sententiously and perhaps facetiously remarked: "That there British Lord, who visited us some time back, has fixed up a villainous scheme to transplant the whole of the inhabitants of Great Hope to British soil, to vivify the decadent British stock that was fast degenerating under the rule of aristocrats and effete monarchs." This was, indeed, an occasion that sorely tried the imagination of those guileless people, and brought forth many scintillations of wit and wisdom.

When Mr. Angus MacKenneth first heard the news, it must be confessed that he felt just a little hurt, as Mary and himself were not included in the invitation. He told Mary so, and said that had he been invited, he would just have loved to have taken his little girl along with him, and would have further taken the opportunity of visiting the demesnes of his grandsires, in the Highlands of Scotland. It was a matter of pride with Mr. MacKenneth that he was conversant with the history of his family. He, like all of Scottish descent, possessed the prescribed amount of pride and pedigree. He was well versed in Scottish and English history, especially that part of it that included the massacre of Glencoe, and the history of all the Scottish clansmen as well.

It was arranged that Miss Emily Lawrence was to stay with Mary while the Wilcoxes were away in England.

Mary MacKenneth was very much interested in the prospective journey of her uncle Si, and everything that he might possibly need on his journey was carefully and categorically gone over by her.

Never did Mr. Silas Thompson feel himself of so much importance, for between Aunt Janet and Mary MacKenneth, to say nothing of the admonitions of Angus, he wondered whether Mr. Wilcox senior had had to pass through the same ordeal whenever he crossed the ocean. Silas had gone and come, and with him had returned Phil Knox, and to be sure, Phil Knox was the more important of the two. He assumed a supercilious and superior air when mingling with his fellow townsmen. When anybody ventured a statement he invariably elaborated and commented upon it, and would often flatly contradict it, and would wind up his emphatic dictum by saying, "You should have been with me in Paris, or in London, or in Vienna, or in Constantinople or in Jerusalem.

He assumed to be a veritable encyclopedia to his unsophisticated companions. One would ask him, "What is the name of that there place you were telling us about, Phil?" and some of the more timid and deferential would even prefix the word Mr. to Phil, and address him as Mr. Phil. This did not detract in any way, you may be sure, from his conceit, or add anything to his modesty.

"Traveling does sure learn a man a lot of things," one of them remarked to another, in referring to Phil Knox. As for Mrs. Knox, her husband now seemed to inspire her with a feeling of wonderment and awe. She could hardly bring herself to believe that this was the same good-natured, careless Phil whom she had so often taken to task.

She hardly dared to even mildly contradict him, and would listen patiently, and open-mouthed to his many grossly exaggerated tales of adventure.

The description of Reginald's wedding festivities, which lasted three whole days, she would ask him to recount again and again. On each recital, Phil would add something more to his already grotesquely exaggerated narrative.

Like all wonderful things, the wonder engendered by Silas Thompson's and Phil Knox's return slowly died down. You may be sure that Silas Thompson brought back many a pretty present for Mary, nor did he forget Emily Lawrence, for she too received many pretty presents from him, and from the Wilcoxes as well; and as for Angus MacKenneth, Silas brought him a most wonderful plaid of tartan, the Tartan of the Macdonalds, the clan that was massacred at Glencoe, and a most appropriate and appreciated present, which Angus gratefully acknowledged to be the case.

For a few months the villagers went the even tenor of their way. The next surprise was the sudden departure of Mr. Wilcox senior and his return with his son George. Gradually the true state of affairs as relating to George Wilcox leaked out, and of course, Mr. Silas Thompson was the first to be apprised of the really sad condition of young Wilcox. Mr. Silas Thompson was perpetually being pestered with questions by the inquisitive villagers, and it took him all his time and exhausted all his ingenuity to answer the various and pointed questions. The most effective way, he found, was to say that he did not care to speak of a matter he regarded as professional; and at other times, when his inquirers were more persistent

than usual, he would revert to his legal phraseology, and divide himself and his hearers and George Wilcox into one, two and three parts, and would bring about an utter confusion of mind on the part of his hearers. "Now, let me see," he would say. "Supposing you constituted me the party of the second part, and supposing you and I, as parties of the first part and second part agreed to constitute Mr. George Wilcox the party of the third part," and so he would go on, until he had his hearers utterly confused and bewildered, and when he was through, he would say, "Well, John, I have given you all I know in the matter, and I have endeavored to make it plain to you."

"Oh yes, Silas, you surely have, if I can only get them parties straightened out in my mind," John would remark.

"Think it all over, John, think it all over. Law divides people into parts, you know, to prevent confusing one with another."

So John Smith had to be contented with the attorney's explanation, and would go away still trying to disentangle, in his mind, those various parties and parts, and to get the straight of it, as he would say to himself.

Mary MacKenneth and Emily Lawrence were to be sent to an eastern academy to have the finishing touches given their education.

Mr. Silas Thompson was repeatedly being sent here and there by Mr. Wilcox, senior, to get his son out of some scrape or entanglement, and to straighten out matters for him.

Mr. Silas Thompson apparently seemed to have a monopoly of the unpleasant tasks of life but he regarded that as a part of the professional serv-

ices, to be rendered his life-long patrons and friends.

Here we shall leave these good people to solve their own doubts and problems in their own way and follow Sir Reginald Streetfield in his adventures among the mountain passes of north-western India.

Sir Reginald's regiment, the 110th foot, had seen a good deal of fighting. The major had been killed, and Captain Brosby, as ranking captain, had been promoted to the rank of major. The senior Lieutenant of Reginald's company, having been badly wounded, was invalided home to England. He would have been advanced to the rank of Captain, taking Brosby's place. This left a vacancy, and Colonel Tom Tom had placed Reginald in command of the company, with the brevet rank of Captain.

Bill Burke had now become Captain Streetfield's orderly, and a right good faithful servant he made. Captain Streetfield's company had been stationed in a small mud fort, which was so situated at the highest point of an angle, made by the junction of two lofty mountain ridges, as to command the valley on both slopes of these mountain peaks.

The fort was fairly accessible from the inner slopes of these mountain ridges, but on the rear and the outer sides it looked down upon a sheer precipice of nearly a thousand feet. It was defended by several long range guns and pieces of mountain artillery, supplemented by machine guns.

The fort was controlled on both sides by the sharply extended ridges of the mountain ranges, but its natural defensive position made it hard to assault and more difficult to capture.

Every few weeks a British column would make its way upward towards the fort, having to fight every foot of its way, in order to carry supplies to the defenders. The accommodations for the troops in the fort consisted of huts made of dried mud, and supplemented to a large extent with camp tents.

Captain Streetfield, as commanding officer of the company and hence commander of the fort, occupied one of the largest of these huts, which Will Burke immediately christened Streetfield Manor, much to the amusement of the men. At times the garrison would be signaled from a neighboring mountain peak and ordered to make a sortie with half their company, in a given direction.

This activity was always welcomed, for life in the couped-up quarters of the fort was necessarily very monotonous. The garrison occasionally ventured out on a sortie and engaged the enemy in a brisk skirmish, and would lose some of the company, but always managed to bring back their dead and wounded, for these fierce mountain tribes are notorious for mutilating the dead and wounded of the enemy should any of them fall into their hands. One of the largest of the mud huts was improvised into a hospital. Here the ingenuity of the young army surgeon would be often put to test, for single handed and without skilled assistants he would perform some of the most delicate operations, and Captain Streetfield would frequently volunteer to assist him; and, under the surgeon's directions, would give the anaesthetic, in which service he soon became quite skillful.

The doctor, on his part, as the second ranking

officer, would relieve Captain Streetfield when his duties permitted him to do so.

Some weeks passed in this desultory fighting. Reginald heard from his folks at home as regularly as the mails could get through the enemies' lines. The long letters he received from Veronica, full of love and affection, were ever a source of inspiration to him. From his mother he received the most encouraging and loving epistles. Bill Burke was always pleased to bring letters to his Captain and his face would beam as he handed them to him, saying as he did so, "Sure, it will be indeed yourself sir, that will be joyous this day."

Streetfield had been about four months on active service when he received a letter from Veronica, breathing all the joyousness of a pure and beautiful soul anticipating the advent of the most momentous occurrence in her life—the next in happiness, she said, to her marriage to Reginald. She prayed fervently that this dreadful war would be over before that wonderful event happened, but should that not be so, she wanted her soldier boy to stay where his duty called, that she herself, she added, was the daughter of a French soldier and the wife of a British officer, and that she purposed being brave and courageous, as befitting the daughter and wife of a soldier.

This news filled Reginald with joy, not, however, unmingled with apprehension and anxiety, and he longed to be near Veronica, in her hour of travail and distress. But stern duty kept him at his post. Fortunately for him, the days were replete with excitement. On one occasion he was compelled to take half his company and divide them again into two bodies, and proceed with one on each side of

the valley, until he cleared the mountain summits of sharpshooters who had ensconced themselves along the summits. It was exciting and dangerous work, but he was able to carry it out without any great loss of life. In doing this, however, he had inflicted severe loss upon the enemy. Reginald was so closely occupied that he could not find time to write excepting during the long hours of the night.

Not long after the occurrence just related, the enemy with incredible labor had drawn up some artillery during the hours of darkness to the almost inaccessible ridges of the mountain peak commanding the fort, and had swarmed up these ridges in immense numbers. As the day began to break, the enemy opened fire with their artillery upon the mud fort, and shells began to fall thickly and many burst within its confines, causing several casualties.

The fort artillery, however, promptly silenced most of these guns. At this the enemy rushed the fort, trusting to their overwhelming numbers to overcome the resistance of the feeble garrison.

The British used their machine guns to good effect upon the on-rushing horde, and mowed down scores of them, but this did not apparently check their momentum, for they succeeded in reaching the walls of the fort, and attempted to get their scaling ladders into position.

From the top and ledges of the walls the British machine guns were trained upon the enemy, who lost so prodigiously that they finally withdrew the remnants of their forces. It was the inaccuracy of the enemies' fire and faulty ammunition that saved the garrison. Not one out of five shells

that struck the fort exploded. This is what really saved the garrison that day. The fight, while it lasted, was a desperate one, the garrison losing over thirty per cent of their effective force. Within the fort a most grewsome aspect presented itself, and the surgeon had his hands full for many days thereafter.

Shortly after this encounter, Will Burke saved the garrison, or rather it was saved through his vigilance and his alertness. It came about in this manner. The losses caused by the enemies' last assault upon the garrison were so numerous that it was greatly depleted. Being short of men, Orderly Will Burke was detailed on picket duty.

One night while keeping guard on that section of the wall of the fort overlooking the precipitous mountainside, Burke felt sure he heard a noise like the distant ticking of a clock proceeding apparently from the abyss below. He listened attentively, and attempted in vain to peer into the abysmal darkness. He immediately reported the occurrence to the commanding officer, Captain Streetfield, and he, after careful investigation, confirmed Will Burke. The Captain was assured that he, too, heard the far distant ticking. "I believe the beggars are undermining the fort to blow us up," said Captain Streetfield. Towards morning the noise ceased.

Upon careful examination the next morning they could observe that there was an immense ledge or boulder of rock a hundred feet long and about fifty feet wide bulging out of the precipitous mountain side.

The Captain immediately concluded that the enemy, taking advantage of the cover afforded by

the boulder, had proceeded to burrow upwards in order to lay a mine below the fort and blow it into the air.

Countermining was immediately started, the work being carried on only during the day. The enemy could be heard ceaselessly working during the hours of the night.

Thus it resolved itself into a race between them. The enemy had evidently struck horizontally just beneath the ledge, and, passing in far enough, had skirted around its inner margin, and had started burrowing upwards. The garrison had the advantage of position, and after two weeks of incessant labor, they had their mine all primed and ready to be set off.

They waited anxiously the coming of the night, as they purposed entrapping, if possible, the enemy's miners, who apparently were present there only during the night. When the time arrived to set off the mine, Streetfield listened attentively before doing so, for the tic-tac-tac sounds of the enemy's digging. Having assured himself that the enemy was there, he ordered the mine set off.

Thre was a deafening roar, followed immediately by a great noise caused by falling rocks. The next morning the garrison, to their delight, observed that a great chasm has been blown out of the mountain side, taking the boulder completely away with it. Henceforth they had a clear view and all danger in that direction was averted.

Shortly after this the British expeditionary forces advanced against the enemy, who had retired into the mountain fastnesses. This proved to be a very crucial operation.

Captain Streetfield was ordered to blow up his fort and to join the main body of his regiment with his company, the wounded being relegated to the rear. This he accordingly proceeded to do.

The main body of the British forces had advanced several miles ahead, and Streetfield followed up with his small company. He had thrown out his scouts well on either side and in advance. They had passed over several mountains, when suddenly out of a ravine, which abound in these elevations, a large body of the enemy that had concealed themselves therein, debouched and attacked the column in the rear. Captain Streetfield's force was at this moment at the base of a hill, which they were preparing to climb. He immediately deployed his men, and, getting his guns into position, turned about and faced the enemy.

The great strength, numbers and ferocity of the enemy soon endangered the very existence of the whole company, notwithstanding that, the enemy's front and flanks were repeatedly mowed down with rifle, mountain gun and machine gun fire, and great gaps torn into his center. They came on, however, in such great hordes that they threatened to smother out the scanty British force.

Throughout their advance, the enemy kept up a constant fusillade of rifle fire. The plucky little British force was almost wiped out. Will Burke, who was helping at a machine gun section, noticed some yards above him a sort of rift or cleft in the mountain side, and after giving the enemy a tremendous broadside, he seized the machine gun, and with the aid of his companions, succeeded in dragging it up into the shelter of the cleft. This attempt was met with a shower of bullets on the

part of the enemy, some of which were unfortunately effective. Nevertheless, they managed to reach shelter ,and, placing their machine gun under cover, they kept up a constant sprinkling of bullets upon the enemy. They were thus able for a time to keep the ferocious hordes at bay.

Captain Streetfield had, with great presence of mind, dispatched a signaller to the top of the hill, to get into communication, if possible, with the main body of the British forces.

Will Burke could see, from his elevated position, the remnant of the British force still making an heroic stand. He saw also his Captain serving a mountain gun, the gunners having been all either killed or wounded. Burke now trained his own gun on the oncoming assailants of his Captain, and kept upon them a continuous peppering of machine-gun bullets.

Not long after this he saw his Captain fall and, instructing his companions to keep up their sweep of bullets, he dashed forward. On reaching the Captain's side, Bill Burke coolly aimed and fired the mountain gun, which had been loaded but not fired, owing to the loss of the gun crew and the wounding of Captain Streetfield. Having fired it, Burke removed the breech and lock in order to disable the gun, and carefully picking up his Captain, he placed him across his shoulders, and proceeded to carry him back to the shelter of the ravine.

The bullets of the enemy in the meanwhile fell like hail all around him. But he seemed to have borne a charmed life, and successfully brought his captain under shelter.

The few British soldiers, who still held on be-

low, seeing this deed of heroism, gave forth a cheer.

Will Burke and his comrades, did not cease for a moment to play their machine guns upon the enemy. The position, which he so fortunately discovered, was one of great natural advantage and they were able to successfully repel the ferocious attacks of the enemy.

In small numbers the rest of the unwounded British Tommies made their way upwards toward the God-sent shelter, some bringing their machine guns with them, and some even dragging up a mountain gun. All the officers were either killed or wounded, not even a sergeant or corporal being spared. Will Burke took command of such remnants of the force that had found lodgement in his ravine. He even facetiously called himself Robinson Crusoe, the lord of the ravine.

With so much determination and skill did this small and gallant remnant defend itself, that it was plainly to be seen that the enemy was beginning to count his losses. These fierce Afridis decided to await the surrender of what was left of the British force. They felt certain that the British would do this if only from lack of water and food. So they retired to a safe distance, and formed themselves into a cordon around the base of the hill.

There were no possible exits of escape left the British forces, so the enemy decided to abide his time. But his expectations were not to be fulfilled, for in a short while distant firing was heard, and the Afridis were soon in a precipitous retreat.

In the meanwhile, Captain Streetfield had recovered consciousness. He had been struck on the

head by a bullet, which evidently had been deflected by his helmet, but it had torn his scalp open for several inches, and rendered him unconscious from its impact. He was able, nevertheless, to resume command of what was left of his company. There were barely twenty-five per cent left of them.

The Captain surmised correctly that his heliograph signaller had succeeded in attracting the attention of the main column, and had informed them of the precarious condition of the company. Immediately a relieving column was dispatched to their assistance. This column caught the retreating Afridis in a net, and completed their destruction, which Streetfield's gallant company had so well begun.

The Captain's dead and wounded were soon picked up by the relieving column, and the remnant of his force emerged from their cover, much to the surprise of the men of the relieving column, many of whom evinced a curiosity to survey this saving cleft in the hillside.

Will Burke's part in the fight was soon made known, and he was hailed as a hero, nor were his brave deeds to escape official notice. They were duly recorded, and William Burke had the honor of being awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in action.

Captain Streetfield's wounds soon healed and he was able to completely resume his duties.

It is not our purpose to follow the manœuvers of the British forces. Sufficient to say, that after an arduous and active campaign of two months, from the date of the last action recounted, the enemy's forces were dispelled, and the rebellion was thor-

oughly crushed. The movements of the 110th regiment were so uncertain during the period of active campaigning that although Reginald had contrived to write home fairly regularly he had not received any mail for some time.

He was therefore the more anxious to get back to a frontier military depot, where his mail awaited him. Arriving there and having secured his letters, he locked himself in his quarters; and, leaving orders with Bill Burke that he should not be disturbed except on important matters, he settled himself down to read his letters from home.

There was a large number from Veronica, others from his mother, several from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe and many from friends scattered here and there. He glanced over the post-office dates of mailing and receiving of the letters written by Veronica and his mother, his purpose being to read them in chronological order. He noticed that all the letters from Veronica and his mother were written not later than two months before, although there were several from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe of a later date.

However, he proceeded to read Veronica's letter of the first date. The happy and joyous spirit of this letter seemed to inspire him with a great longing to be with her. He thereupon decided that now, the campaign being over, he would obtain leave of absence and go home immediately. Veronica could not very well come to him under the happy circumstance of her being.

Each letter he carefully re-read, and in the last one she spoke of going to London to stay a short while with her parents. At this point he was interrupted. Some important regimental matters

were being discussed and he had been sent for by Colonel Tom Tom. The Colonel informed him that he had been successful in securing for him the command of his company, and that his conduct had been mentioned in the dispatches, and was highly commented upon by the general commanding the forces.

Captain Streetfield thought it was a good opportunity to broach the matter of leave to the Colonel. He thereupon informed him of the condition of Lady Streetfield, asking him under the circumstances to indorse his application for leave.

"Why, why, my dear boy! Here, let me offer my congratulations! Give me your hand. I trust it will be a boy, Captain Streetfield, and that he will be every inch a soldier like his daddy when he grows up and joins Her Majesty's forces. I will see that you get your leave, Captain, and more than that, I will stand Godfather to the boy, that is, if it is a boy. I have stood Godfather several times by proxy. I could tell by your radiant countenance, Streetfield, that you were the recipient of good news."

Reginald thanked the good-natured Colonel, and having concluded the business he had in hand, he was eager to get back to his quarters and finish the perusal of his letters. He read through the letters from his mother. She, too, wrote in a happy cheerful vein, and Reginald registered an inward prayer of thanksgiving for having been blessed with so true a woman for his mother, guardian and friend, as she had proved herself to be to him, and also for so true and noble a wife. With a heart full of thanksgiving, he passed to the letters from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe. The first was

from Scotland. In it he informed Reginald that he was on a trip to Scotland, and purposed going to Ireland before he returned home. Dr. Sharpe gave him the news of their neighborhood, of his wife and mother, both of whom he reported well, and bearing up wonderfully and bravely with his absence.

The next letter from Dr. Sharpe was written from Ireland, and the third from London. The letter from London was written in a heart-broken strain. On reading it through, Reginald was utterly dumfounded, crushed and stupefied. The letter went on to relate how Monsieur Dieulafoi had died, and how Veronima was at his bedside unremittingly ,and how, after they had decided to carry out the wishes of her father, to bury him in France, Veronica had accompanied Madam Dieulafoi with the remains to that country, and how she had unfortunately fallen down during the passage over the channel, sustaining internal injuries, and that the next day she had had the great misfortune of a premature delivery, and that the little life had lingered but a moment after its birth into this world; and the saddest news of all, poor Veronica passed away most unexpectedly next day, and that her last words were, "Tell Reggie not to fret, tell him I have gone to our baby," and further that Veronica was buried in France, beside her father, following the ardent wishes of her mother, Madam Dieulafoi.

After reading this terrible news, Reginald was torn with agony. He blamed and censured himself for not staying by the side of Veronica. He made a great effort, and went on with the perusal of Dr. Sharpe's letter. And what he read was

enough indeed to crush the soul of any man.

Dr. Sharpe went on to say that he was in the west of Ireland when he received the sad news of Veronica's death. He hurried back to Streetfield Manor, only to find that the shock of her death had proved to be the death blow to Lady Streetfield, who, since his father's death, had sadly failed in health. That his mother had become unconscious on hearing of Veronica's death, and had passed from one swoon into another, until the next day, when she died.

Reginald immediately sent for Major Brosby, and Brosby was greatly grieved and affected when told of the death of his sister Dora, the dowager Lady Streetfield, but he was shocked beyond measure to learn of the tragic death of Veronica.

These two strong men were bowed down in grief and their mutual sympathies helped in a great measure to restore their self-control.

"The heavier the cross the greater the crown, Reggie," said Major Brosby. "Come old man, you have been hard hit. How hard, God and yourself only know." Reginald related the conversation he had had with Colonel Tom Tom just a moment before reading the sad news and how the Colonel had promised to indorse his application for leave, and he had even volunteered, he said, to stand Godfather to the child should it prove to be a son.

'You stay here, Streetfield. I must go and get the Colonel. He will never forgive me if he learns that you were in grief and I knew of it and did not ask his kind sympathy and aid. I must go and get him, Reginald. It will do you good to hear his kind and cheery voice and words of warm and heartfelt sympathy."

The good colonel was astonished beyond measure, and greatly distressed to hear of Reginald's sad bereavements, and he hastened over with Brosby to do all he could to console Reginald, and to express to him his heart-felt sympathies.

People may say what they like, but the genuine sympathy of a great soul goes a long way to assuage the grief of those who mourn. Colonel Tom Tom was just such a big-souled man, and it would be untrue to say that his hearty and sincerely sympathetic words did not bring about a calmer feeling in the breasts of Reginald and Brosby.

"You better go home, Streetfield," the colonel said, "as soon as you can get there. Your presence will be needed. You may start tomorrow if you care to. I will arrange your leave upon urgent private affairs."

Reginald, who had revolved the whole matter in his mind, revolted at the thought of going home and finding both wife and mother dead and he concluded to stay in India, and keep steadily to his duties.

This he felt would be the only means by which he could successfully counteract the terrible depression which he knew would overtake him from time to time, and if not resisted, would undoubtedly overwhelm him. Reginald thereupon informed his colonel of his resolutions and his reasons for making them.

"No doubt, no doubt, you are right, Streetfield. Such a sudden shock and bereavement I am sure would completely overwhelm me. Give me your hand, my boy. God bless and comfort you. Anything I can do for you, you have but to ask. Goodbye, Streetfield, you too Major. You have lost

your sister. I remember Lady Streetfield very well. She was exceedingly kind to me when I spent a few days at Streetfield Manor a few years ago. I have good reasons to remember her kindness. It is all too dreadful, but life is made up of just such dreadful things. It is full of vicissitudes, changes and griefs. There is often nothing left to us but to stand firmly and face our trials and sorrows manfully Time, Streetfield, is the only physician in your case. May he be lenient to you. Good-bye again, my two boys. You may be sure that my heart goes out to both of you." Thus saying, Colonel Tom Tom left the two young officers to themselves.

"It is no wonder that the whole regiment will go to the devil for the Colonel," remarked Major Brosby, after the Colonel had departed. "Was there ever a greater soul placed in a body of a British officer? Our good brave Colonel, God bless him."

Streetfield had several letters from the steward of his estate, and found so far as business was concerned, all things appeared to be eminently satisfactory. These business letters he answered in due course. He also replied to those of the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, and informed him of his determination to stay in India for some time to come, and that he had volunteered to join a scientific expedition that the government purposed sending to Tibet, and that he had the powerful backing of his Colonel. He anticipated that the offer of his services would be accepted. He was to be, he said, executive of the military end of it.

The mission was to be absent four years or more, and he instructed Dr. Sharpe to forward his let-

ters in future in care of the government at Calcutta, and that they would know where to forward them from time to time. It was indeed a heart-rending task for Reginald to write to the doctor, as well as to reply to the other numerous letters of condolence and sympathy that had reached him.

Bill Burke, now a full sergeant and a V. C., at that, had by the influence of Colonel Tom Tom, at the solicitation of Reginald, been granted permission to accompany the Tibetian mission as personal attendant attached to Captain Sir Reginald Streetfield, Baronet.

Captain Streetfield had to busy himself with so many of those requirements that would have to be included in his equipment that it, in a great measure, took him out of himself.

Here we shall leave him and retrace our steps to the time when we witnessed the death scene of Monsieur Dieulafoi.

To Veronica, after the death of her father and the reconciliation of her sister Josephine, the problem presented itself whether or not it was her bounden duty to take her husband into her confidence, in all that occurred in regard to Josephine. After reviewing the whole matter in her mind, and taking into consideration the circumstance of Reginald's absence on active service and so far away, she reluctantly concluded that it would be wiser, after all, to await the time when she could more fully relate to him all the circumstances that led to Josephine's marriage, and the painful episode that followed. Having arrived at this decision, after the most careful consideration of all the facts bearing upon the matter, she felt a great deal easier in her mind, for she resented

heartily anything that partook of the nature of a deception. The death of her father and the reconciliation of Josephine removed from her mind any hesitancy that she might have possessed relative to the oath exacted from her at the time of Josephine's marriage, and the forcible reiteration of that oath at the time of her own marriage.

It was the request of Monsieur Dieulafoi himself, before he died, and the desire of Madame Dieulafoi, that the old Bonapartist be interred in the churchyard of their native village. Veronica and Josephine interposed no objections to this very natural request and as we have already stated, the old warrior was buried as he desired.

Josephine had not even hinted to her sister that Laudet was not all that she desired him to be. His consummate art of dissimulation completely deceived Madam Dieulafoi and Varonica. They, therefore, treated him most cordially and even affectionately, as befitting the husband of a daughter and a sister.

Veronica had of course informed her mother-in-law, Lady Streetfield, of the loss of her father, and also informed her that she purposed accompanying her father's remains to France, where it was his wish to be buried.

Monsieur Laudet had surrounded Josephine in her home in London with everything that she could possibly desire in keeping with his position, so that, when Veronica had occasion to visit her sister, there was nothing to indicate that Laudet was anything but a highly cultured French gentleman attached to the diplomatic corps of his country in London.

Madame Dieulafoi, with her two daughters, and

Monsieur Laudet, who was most assiduous and solicitous in his attentions to every want of Madame Dieulafoi, Veronica, and his wife, accompanied the remains of Monsieur Dieulafoi to France.

It was a bright and balmy day when they embarked at Dover for Calais, but before long a choppy sea set in, which caused the vessel to roll considerably.

Veronica had the great misfortune to trip and fall down the steps leading to her cabin. She was considerably jarred for the moment, but Madame Dieulafoi did not appear to be anxious, and considered it a mere trifle. But in her condition, it proved to be far more serious than thought at first; and when Veronica reached her native village the next day she took alarmingly ill and during that same night was delivered prematurely of a boy, and all the skill of a famous physician, summoned from Paris, proved to be unavailing, and her great soul passed quietly into the Great Beyond, whither her father had so recently preceded her.

Madame Dieulafoi and Josephine wished to have Veronica buried by the side of her father, which was accordingly done. The news was conveyed to Lady Streetfield by Josephine, writing in the name of Madame Dieulafoi. The shock was too great for her and she passed from one swoon to another, until she died the following day.

The Streetfield family lawyer took the initiative and immediately telegraphed to the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, who was at that time touring the west of Ireland. It would be perhaps well to explain here, the silence of Josephine as to her own identity.

Veronica had taken Josephine completely into her confidence, as to her decision not to inform Reginald of Josephine's existence until he returned from war, and her reason for so doing, and Josephine fully agreed with her in the wisdom of her decision. Thus Veronica was buried with her father in France, her ashes to mingle with the ashes of her ancestors. All these harrowing events afforded Monsieur Laudet ample opportunity, of which he was not slow to avail himself, to ingratiate himself into the good graces of his mother-in-law, Madame Dieulafoi. So successful was he in this, that she began to lean upon him and asked his advice in most matters.

He purposed resigning his diplomatic position as soon as he had succeeded in having the sequestrated estates of the Dieulafois returned to the family. Towards that end he had instituted proceedings with the present government in France. Some of the most powerful men in that government had been warm friends of his father and, taking into consideration the fact that Monsieur Dielulafoi was dead, Monsieur Laudet, being thus powerfully supported, finally succeeded in having the estates returned to the family.

Having this in mind was the real reason that Laudet urged the carrying out of Madame Dieulafoi's wish to have Veronica buried with her father and the purpose he had in continuing to keep the knowledge of his own and Josephine's identity from the friends and relatives of Veronica; and, furthermore, he prevailed upon Madame Dieulafoi to continue to stay in France, and to dispose of any property she possessed in London.

Madame Dieulafoi decided to remain in France

where her husband and daughter were buried. The Dieulafoi estates were fairly extensive, and had, during recent years, increased enormously in value.

Monsieur Laudet resigned his diplomatic position and had himself appointed, by Madame Dieulafoi, the superintendent and steward of the Dieulafoi estates. She, as the months passed, became increasingly feeble, and reached a condition where she was unable to give the least attention to the affairs of the estate, and thus everything passed into the hands of Laudet. Monsieur Laudet's main purpose was to keep the Dieulafois and Streetfields apart, and especially to keep the Streetfields from any knowledge of the restoration of the Dieulafoi's estates as he calculated that in the event of Madame Dieulafoi's death, the whole estate would fall to Josephine, and thereby into his own hands.

Any efforts that Sir Reginald Streetfield's attorney may have made to gain any further information regarding Veronica, Laudet adroitly frustrated. He managed the estates with great care and skill, and made many valuable improvements on them. Another precaution he had taken was to obliterate all traces of Veronica's grave. Veronica being buried next to her father, it was not a difficult matter, especially with the free use of money, and further than that, he succeeded, by the same means, in having even the records of Veronica's death destroyed.

Thus Monsieur Laudet had brought it about that the Dieulafois and Streetfields were entirely separated, one from the other, separated as if there had never been any union between the two families.

Josephine acquisced in all her husband's decisions, which were invariably presented to her in the most honorable and altruistic colors.

Madame Dieulafoi followed her husband to the grave in less than two years, and the vast Dieulafoi property fell into the hands of Monsieur Laudet. These two years were in every way the happiest in poor Josephine's life. The exemplary conduct of Laudet, his unfailing kindness and his rigid attention to the Dieulafoi interests led Josephine to hope that a new era had dawned upon her, and she was quite happy with her mother and her husband.

For a year after her mother's death, Monsieur Laudet walked the straight and narrow way, but almost violently did his evil habits seem to return to him, and he again plunged into a vortex of gambling and dissipation. Love of gambling seemed to be the cardinal and predominating evil in the character of Monsieur Laudet, and in its train followed other evils. With Monsieur Laudet, when he ceased to gamble he apparently ceased to be evil, but when he gambled, he grew to be the incarnation of evil itself.

This much we have to say for Laudet, that his evil machinations never partook of the committing of any deeds of violence. In that respect, he was humane. He would give largely and free-heartedly to any cause of charity that had for its purpose the amelioration of physical pain and suffering, and to every kind and variety of eleemosynary institutions. To his friends, he was at all times generous; he would gladly loan a friend five thousand francs in the morning, and would take a satanic

delight in fleecing him of that sum in a game of cards that same night.

By his own personal qualifications and natural gifts, and by his brilliant powers of mind, and his wide erudition—for Monsieur Laudet in his sane moments was a voracious and an omnivorous reader, art, science, and literature were eagerly followed and carefully studied by him—Monsieur Laudet could have undoubtedly become one of the great men of the world, and have left an imperishable name behind him. But the fatal influence and spell of gambling would overtake him, and once having yielded, he would run the full gamut of its evil way. It is just this strange, inexplicable behavior of men like Laudet that gives color to the belief that perhaps after all, there may be a personal devil whose evil spirit seems to unexplainably clutch and hold the very souls of some men.

CHAPTER X

DEJECTED SUITORS

Nearly six years have passed since first we visited Great Hope. That village looked identically as it did when we were first there, excepting, perhaps, that true to a happy inspiration, the churches had received a new coat of paint, and so also had the village school-house. These buildings stood out in pleasant relief against a background of less favored and less adorned structures. It is now summer time, and Mr. Silas Thompson could be found at his favorite seat, under the beautiful poplar trees, referred to before, still wrestling with truant sheets of paper, seduced from their safe moorings by truculent and vicious gusts of wind, or he could be found reading, or, what was more likely, engaged in an animated conversation with one or more of the villagers, and if one were inquisitive enough to listen, he would, almost without a doubt, have heard those legal expressions with which we have all become so familiar.

Silas had long acquired, as we have already stated several times in the course of this narrative, a habit of reducing all arguments and conversations into various parts and so adoitly did he confound his hearers with these various parts, that before the controversy proceeded very far, his opponent would be so hopelessly confused that he would admit as a matter of self-protection Silas Thompson's contention. "I wish you would leave out them parts, Silas," the blacksmith would say. "I cannot keep track of any of them, and when you bring four of them parts for me to pick and

choose from, there is nothing left for me, Silas, but hitting the turnpike."

Years had set lightly upon Silas Thompson. He did not look a day older than when we first made his acquaintance over five years ago, though perhaps his expression may have appeared graver, and his features a trifle less mobile than of yore, as he sat this morning, under the old trees.

A buggy drew up, and out leaped Mr. Angus MacKenneth, as powerful and athletic as ever, although a few gray hairs could be seen here and there on his head, as if struggling for recognition. His mustache and beard, or whiskers as they call them in Tennessee as well as in other states, were beginning to show streaks of gray. He had called to see Silas, as he desired to talk over certain incidents that had recently happened to George Wilcox.

These two men had often talked over the unfortunate failure of George. Angus had very little sympathy for him, and he declared over and over again that all George needed was somebody who was able, like himself, to take hold of him and shake the daylight out of him. That his father, and more particularly his mother and sister Grace, had thoroughly spoiled him by their maudlin sympathy and pampering. As for Silas Thompson, after he had repeatedly divided the Wilcox family into four distinct parts, he was utterly unable to disentangle the knotty problem of George's delinquency and he concluded that it was an inexplicable case beyond the aid of law and man. Having arrived at this, to him, logical explanation, he wisely decided not to worry about the matter any further.

Mary had come home from the academy in the east, and so had Emily. These two young ladies had stayed there for three years and had remained at home since, until very lately, when Emily had accepted an invitation from a school friend to travel with her and her family over Europe. Mary had also been invited, but her father did not wish her to go. "You and I will go some day together, Mary," said her father, and this entirely satisfied her.

Emily and Mary had grown into two very charming and beautiful women, and this was particularly true of Mary. The fame of her beauty had spread all over that corner of the state of Tennessee, and she was often referred to as the most beautiful girl in the State. Her Uncle Si had christened her the Pride of Tennessee.

Since George Wilcox's downfall (we can find no better name for his moral lapse) the hearty friendliness existing between Angus MacKenneth and the Wilcoxes had to some degree waned.

When George happened to be at home, which was seldom lately, MacKenneth and his daughter felt diffident about calling at the Wilcox plantation, and this gradually led to a coolness between the two families; besides, the severe and outspoken condemnation of George's conduct, by MacKenneth, did not improve matters. As far as any contemplated union between George and Emily was concerned, that had been long abandoned.

Emily's revulsion of feeling against George seemed to increase as the days wore on, and she avoided him on every possible occasion, so much so, that when he was at home, Emily would invariably stay with the MacKenneths until he left

again. Unfortunately for Mary, and for her peace of mind, George Wilcox had apparently fallen desperately in love with her, and, much to her discomfiture, thrust his attentions upon her on every and all occasions.

One day George met Mary on her way home from a visit to her Uncle Si, at Great Hope, and much to her annoyance he offered to accompany her home. This she could not very well decline. On the way George had the temerity to declare his love for her, and begged her to marry him as the only hope of his regeneration. He attempted to caress and even to kiss her.

Miss Mary MacKenneth repelled these advances with the utmost dignity and self-possession, and even graciousness. She was sorry for George for as a girl she had always liked him. He had done many little kind acts for her and she had more pity for him than anger.

She very quietly and firmly told George that he must never again mention love to her, that as far as she was concerned it was utterly impossible to care for him, and that although she did not wish to appear prudish, or to affect a stage attitude, he must never again attempt to caress or kiss her, as he had done.

At this George fell into a great passion, and said he would still marry her in spite of her refusal at that time, and that Mary spoke as she did because she was still in love with that young prig of an Englishman, Reginald Streetfield, that it served her right as he did not care for her at all, which he had clearly shown by marrying another; but now, knowing as she did, that Reginald's wife was dead, perhaps Mary was living in

the hope of still being Lady Streetfield, but he did not think for one moment that an English baronet would consider a mountain girl of Tennessee. These remarks of George so greatly disconcerted Mary, and were such a direct and gross affront to her, that she angrily asked him to desist from seeing her any further on the way, and warned him, that if he still persisted in doing so, she would have to appeal to her father for protection against his continued annoyance, but that for the present, she did not purpose acquainting her father as to his conduct and his gross and insulting remarks to her, but if he should ever obtrude upon her again or address her in such a way as he had done, that she would most certainly inform him.

George Wilcox had a wholesome dread of his uncle Angus MacKenneth so he churlishly bade her good evening, turned on his heels, and left her.

Sir Reginald Streetfield had consistently endeavored to keep up his correspondence with his college chum and companion, George Wilcox, to whom he was genuinely attached; but George had long ceased to answer his letters, and all correspondence had ceased between them. Sir Reginald and Silas Thompson, however, had kept up an unbroken and faithful correspondence. Sir Reginald had asked Silas Thompson, in one of his letters, as to the reason of George's continued silence, and Silas had hinted in the most delicate way that George had not been quite himself lately. This correspondence of his with Sir Reginald was one of the joys of his life and he looked forward with eagerness to the arrival of these letters.

Mr. Thompson had followed Sir Reginald all through his experiences in India, and through that

harrowing period of his life following the news of the death of his wife and mother.

Silas Thompson's letters breathed the fervent sympathies of a great and unblemished soul, and proved to be a fountain of hope and encouragement to Reginald in his hour of trial. His letters never failed to mention the many friends of Reginald in Great Hope,—Angus and Mary MacKenneth, Matthew Stephens, Dr. Vernon, Grace Wilcox, Emily Lawrence, and some others. He told Sir Reginald about Mary's going away to school and coming back, and of Emily's trip to Europe; but he barely mentioned George Wilcox, excepting in the most casual way.

Silas usually read Sir Reginald's letters to Mary, in which he seldom failed to ask after her, and to be remembered to her. To Mary, her recollections of Sir Reginald had always been pleasant, and she too grieved when Uncle Si told her of Reginald's great bereavement in the loss of his wife and mother. Mary had not very long before that event heard Uncle Silas recount the incidents of his wedding, and all that happened at that time.

Notwithstanding the recent rude behavior of George Wilcox, Mary remembered him as he was in the days of old, when she used to see him walk spryly and proudly with Sir Reginald Streetfield. Her memories of Dr. Vernon, too, were pleasant. He had returned from his studies abroad, and had settled in Philadelphia, a specialist in his chosen line of work, and was making a name for himself. He was still unmarried, but the good dames of Great Hope had long since ceased to take any interest in him in that respect.

At regular intervals Dr. Vernon would visit Great Hope, in expectation, perhaps, of being of some use to George, but his efforts in that direction proved futile. Dr. Vernon generally contrived to see Mary MacKenneth when he visited Great Hope. On one of these visits he had asked Angus MacKenneth for the hand of his daughter, and Angus MacKenneth had bluntly referred him to Mary.

"If the lass will have you, doctor, I will have nothing to say against it. You have always shown yourself to be a good, honorable man, and any man ought to be proud to give you his daughter's hand in marriage, but you must ask Mary, not me."

The doctor warmly thanked Mr. MacKenneth for his encouragement and went in search of Mary, whom he found perusing a book under the shade of a magnolia tree.

After heartily greeting her, Dr. Vernon lost no time in stating the object of his search for her. It was to tell her, he said, how he had loved her for years, from the time when she was a girl of sixteen; and how his love had grown with her years; and that he had waited all this time until he had made a name and position for himself in his profession worthy of her; and that all his efforts in life had been towards that end, so that he could consistently ask her to be his wife; and that he was sure he would make her very, very happy if she would only confide in him, and trust him with herself.

Mary MacKenneth had, from the first, an admiration for the doctor, but she had never contemplated such a possibility as his being in love with her. Yet when she now recalled many little

incidents she could readily believe the truth of his assertions in regard to his long years of love and devotion; and Mary, too, like normally constituted and well brought up girls, looked forward to the time when she would possess a nest and fledglings of her own.

Dr. Vernon was an exemplary man, of excellent bringing up, highly educated, a well read and traveled man and from a material and worldly standpoint, he had made a wonderful position for himself in the medical world, and was therefore an excellent match for any girl. And she did not know on what grounds to refuse him. "From the standpoint of looks?" No, because, as men go, he would be considered decidedly good looking. "From habits and character?" No, because he was exemplary and exceedingly well brought up and of an unblemished character. "From the standpoint of disposition?" No, because Mary knew full well his kindly nature, and his more than amiable disposition. "From his want of general knowledge?" No, Dr. Vernon had clearly proved his intellectual capacity. "On material grounds and possessions?" No, because he had established, young as he was, an enviable position in the medical world and enjoyed a large income therefrom.

Her refusal could only be based on a personal motive. She did not love him, yet she greatly admired and respected him. Love, she had been told and often read, took its foundation in admiration and respect, more particularly respect.

Mary found herself drifting, and felt that she was lost if she did not venture to bring forward some excuse for refusing him.

"Speak, Mary, will you marry me?" pleaded Dr. Vernon.

This gave Mary the opportunity for which she was grasping, and she said to Dr. Vernon, "But I do not love you, Dr. Vernon. I believe you when you say that you have loved me all these years, but what about me? I do not love you."

"You respect me, do you not, Mary?" asked the doctor.

"I do, indeed, Dr. Vernon. Not only do I respect you, but I admire you," returned Mary, sincerely and earnestly.

"Love will come after marriage if you respect me as you say you do. It always does, Mary," pleaded the doctor again.

"That perhaps is true, Dr. Vernon, in many cases. Will it prove true in mine?"

Mary began to feel her power, and was going to use it to her best endeavor to defend herself, for otherwise she knew that she was lost. She instinctively felt that this was one of the crucial moments in her life. She did not love Dr. Vernon, no matter how much she admired and respected him, and she certainly was not going to consent to marry him under those circumstances.

"Come, Mary, you are going to marry me, are you not? Your father has already consented to my asking you. It is now for you to say. I have told you how fervently and truly I have loved you for so many years," earnestly pleaded Dr. Vernon.

At this juncture a happy inspiration came to Mary, pointing a way out of the danger she was in of being persuaded into consenting to marry a man she did not love.

"Do you know, Dr. Vernon, that I have already

refused one offer of marriage, and I will tell you from whom. From George Wilcox. I am afraid I deeply wounded his *amour propre*, but he is a different man from you in every way. He has proved himself to be utterly worthless, while you have been good, generous, manly and noble. Quite a different man altogether from George Wilcox. A man that any girl should be proud to marry. It was an easy matter for me to refuse George Wilcox. To do otherwise would be sheer madness, whether I loved him or not. And of course I do not love him, or ever have, or ever could. He had no right to propose to me, while you, Dr. Vernon, have every right, and I am conscious of the honor you are doing me, which makes it all the harder for me to refuse you; but I do not love you, Dr. Vernon, and I cannot consent to being your wife." All this Mary said in a sympathetic and kindly manner.

"Mary, you must not, you cannot refuse me. Think it over. Talk it over with your father, and let me know your answer to-morrow," entreatingly urged Dr. Vernon; but she was not going to lose her point of vantage. She made up her mind to settle the matter there and then, once for all. She knew if she hesitated she was lost, because she was aware of her father's great predilection and admiration for Dr. Vernon. If she appealed to him, Mary felt she was indeed lost. So she said,

"I will not keep you in any further suspense, Dr. Vernon. I do not love you, and I cannot consent to marrying you. You know we are of Highland stock and our passions are both deep and strong, and I cannot marry a man I do not love, with every fibre of my being. I have no such feeling for you, and

I am not going to marry you. I wish, indeed, that I did love you; I am sure you would make me very, very happy. Please let us now go in." All this Mary said most earnestly and decidedly.

"I am grieved beyond words, Mary. Perhaps you are right. If you do not love me, and feel that you cannot, it is best then as you say. I am grateful to you for your candor; but, as you say, you are of Highland stock and speak out your feelings. That is characteristic of that race. We shall be friends at any rate. Let us try to forget what has taken place here today."

"I want you to believe me when I say, Dr. Vernon, that I have always regarded you as one of the best of men, and now you have, indeed, proved yourself to be so. The woman who loves and will marry you is truly fortunate, and to show you how much I trust you and respect you I am going to kiss you just to prove to you that I am, indeed, to be a true, and I hope trusted, friend to you in the future." With that Mary MacKenneth gave him a hearty kiss on the cheek, saying, "Let us go in now and see what father is doing."

"Mary, before we go in, I want to ask you to do me a small favor. Years ago, when in Venice, I purchased this locket for you, and I kept it this long time, just for this occasion. Will you accept it from an old and dear friend of your girlhood days, and should you at any time in life need a friend, I will come immediately to your assistance, no matter where I may be, that is, of course," he added, "if I am still alive. Will you accept this locket as a token of that promise?" He said this so seriously, and with so much emphasis, that Mary burst out laughing, and so did he,

and they went towards the house together, laughing heartily. Thus ended the second proposal that Mary had received in a short time. Taking the locket and chain she said, "Of course I will keep it, Dr. Vernon. But what a singular covenant! It savors of knight errantry. Please accept my warmest thanks. What a chaste piece of work it is. I shall keep it as a remembrance of your kindness and goodness to me since first I met you when a girl." Dr. Vernon then placed the chain and locket around her neck.

"Oh, it is just a notion of mine, Mary, and it's kind of you to humor me. Let us now talk of something else. You remember the Crampton baby with whom you stayed up all night? I had to stay too. Remember that? I want to make a confession. I was guilty of a deception on that occasion. There was little danger to the child, although the symptoms were apparently alarming. It was not the child that was sick at that time, it was I, Mary, and I had long since determined that if we were ever married I was going to tell you about it; but now that we have decided that we are not to marry, I am going to tell you anyhow. It was I that was sick, not the child—sick for the love of you, Mary."

"How could you ever think of doing anything so machiavelian, Dr. Vernon, and there I was so wrought up over that poor child. I very clearly remember it, I thought at the time how good and kind you were. You should not have told that story on yourself. You have spoiled a very good one for me. I have told the incident to so many and I have praised your devotion so much, and now you have spoiled it all."

"It was true devotion, Mary, but not to my work. It was to you. I have always been fond of my work but my devotedness on that occasion was a means to an end. It was to be, as I thought at the time, the opening of a pathway to a greater reward, but that, alas, is not for me. But let us change the subject, and revert as the militarists say, to the *status quo.*" Thus, with kindly tact, did the good doctor try to save his friend from further embarrassment; for which she was grateful. She greatly appreciated his efforts and his rare delicacy of feeling.

Having reached the house, the conversation drifted into different channels. They had both, by this time, quite recovered their equanimity, and there was nothing in their conversation or behavior from which Angus MacKenneth could draw any inference.

Dr. Vernon received the full force of the blow and he had met it courageously and manfully, and he resolved that from that time he would school himself, hard as it might be, to forget Mary. He was convinced that it would be useless for him to further pursue an *ignis fatuus.* He had fought for her, honorably, and lost. He purposed being a good loser, with ill will toward no one, more especially least of all toward Mary.

The doctor's nature was one in which the sense of justice had been developed, and when a matter of simple justice was once brought before him he could not give a verdict against it. Thus it was in regard to Mary and himself. To him, in the future, she was to be nothing more than an old friend, and he would not permit even a trace of malice in that relationship. He even began to think friendly of Reginald; and, for Mary's sake, he wished that

events would so shape themselves that Mary might perhaps find in him her true partner in life.

Mrs. Wilcox and Grace Wilcox kept very much to themselves and to their own devices. Grace used to be very proud of and so wrapped up in her brother George, that when she learned of his waywardness, she was touched to the quick, and she brought all her sisterly affection to bear upon him; and, doubtless, she must have influenced him to some degree.

The mother and sister regarded George's case as simply mental; and on that hypothesis they had traveled to New York, to Boston, and to Philadelphia, to consult certain eminent alienists, or insanity specialists, to see that if they could not help to bring George's mind back to its normal state. Some of these men agreed with the mother and sister in their view that George's behavior was due to a disturbance of the mind, or an injury or shock that had disarranged his mental equilibrium. Others, again, gave it as their opinion that it was a clear case of perversion of mind, and that if George could be placed as a sailor before the mast, his whole physical being would undergo a complete metamorphosis, and that this in its turn would bring about salutary changes in his psychical nature. With these diametrically opposite opinions, Mrs. Wilcox and Grace had to remain content.

In regard to Phil Knox and his wife, we have to confess that at certain intervals, when the moonshiners were more than generous with their gifts of demi-johns of illicit whiskey, Phil would forget all his promises, and leave the narrow way of a strictly temperate life, and it is almost in-

credible to state that even on these heinous occasions, Mrs. Knox would refrain from taking him to task, but would pour the vials of her wrath upon the moonshiners for supplying the means of temptation to her poor Phil, who had not indulged, she said, in any spirituous comfort all the time he was away from those dreadful men in the mountains. It may be mentioned *en passant* that Mrs. Knox's employer, the doctor, who had succeeded to the practice of Dr. Vernon, had proved to be a successful physician, and was greatly liked by the community; and that Mrs. Knox had been equally faithful in her duties to him, as she had been to Dr. Vernon, his predecessor; and barring the frequent gifts to her husband of mountain whiskey and his subsequent performances, she declared herself perfectly happy and contented in that sphere of life into which the Almighty had chosen to place her; but she declared that she had her cross to bear, and it was hers to bear, and for nobody else, and she was carrying it with Christian fortitude, resignation, and patience. That frame of mind, however, did not deter Mrs. Phil Knox from accepting a position as housekeeper to Dr. J. Douglas Vernon at Philadelphia at a greatly increased remuneration, Phil being also engaged as special attendant upon the doctor.

Mrs. Phil Knox solemnly asserverated that this was in direct answer to her fervent prayers to the Almighty, to interpose Himself to separate her dear husband Phil from his friends, the mountaineers, and their horrid whiskey. Thus it came about that Phil Knox and his wife passed again into the service of Dr. J. Douglas Vernon of Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XI

A COMEDY OF ERRORS

When last we heard of Captain Sir Reginald Streetfield, he was busily engaged in preparing for the expedition into Tibet, very materially assisted by Sergeant William Burke, V. C., who showed the greatest solicitude in providing everything that might pertain to the comfort and well being of his military chief.

After much patient and strenuous effort, the expedition was finally organized, and was ready to start on its arduous and perilous mission. Having received its final instructions, the mission started on its dangerous journey over the Himalayan mountains.

As the mission was organized for the purpose of collecting certain scientific data, its personnel consisted of highly scientific men. Captain Streetfield was placed in command of twenty-five Gourkar soldiers, the only defensive force of the expedition.

It had taken nearly five months to secure all the important and indispensable articles, implements, and scientific instruments. This interval afforded Sir Reginald Streetfield ample opportunity and time to bone up, as they say in the army, that is, to study the native languages or vernacular of Nepaul and of Tibet so that he could consistently and successfully command his section of Gourkars. The Government was desirous in every way to avoid giving the mission a military complexion.

We do not purpose relating the many strange experiences and adventures encountered by this

expedition as it went over the mountain passes into Nepaul. After passing through that country, it continued north again, until the mission finally reached its prospective destination.

Nor shall we describe nor name any of those eminent men of science who formed the *raison d'etre* for that expedition and mission. Not only were they scholars and scientists, but gentlemen also of the most amiable and kindly nature and disposition.

To be thrown day after day, and night after night, into the company of such profoundly erudite men, was a source of education and instruction to Captain Streetfield. Nor did he fail to take the greatest advantage of his opportunities. After a fatiguing day of travel, the mission would camp for the night, fires would be lighted, and all would sit wrapped in their heavy fur coats around the glowing embers, their heads ensconced in their large fur caps. Then with lighted pipes the conversation would flow in many channels, embracing many topics, to be interrupted for an interval for the disposal of supper and then to be resumed until sleep overtook the party.

Oh, the splendor of the heavens on those wondrous starry nights! Seen from lofty mountain peaks it would bring home to those men the sublime words of the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

The Gourkars kept vigil over their slumbers, and not infrequently the party would be abruptly awakened by the firing of rifles, as the guards disposed of several wolves that were sneaking around

the encampment and the pack animals, tethered just on the confines of the camp.

With so much exertion and with so many interesting and important details to consider, and with such excellent companionship, Sir Reginald's time and thoughts were fully occupied. It was at night, as he slept under the glorious canopy of stars and looked into its immeasurable depths, that the awful immensity of the space that separated him from Veronica would come home to him and the thought would overwhelm him for the moment.

But these periods of reflection became less and less poignant as month after month passed and as Reginald became more and more absorbed by the fascination of the great work in which the scientists were engaged.

After the first year had passed, he seemed to have recovered much of the buoyancy of his disposition. Will Burke, on the other hand, proved to be an inexhaustible source of wit and merriment to the party. He would often call into play his keen Irish wit to lighten the labor and make less dispiriting some particularly irksome duty. As we have said before, it is not the purpose of this narrative to follow the almost interminable labors, and almost inconceivable efforts, of the members of this expedition. Suffice it to say that after a stay of over four years, the scientists had acquired, and collected, and arranged, and recorded all their data, and they turned their faces towards India.

So much satisfaction did Sir Reginald give, in the performance of his duties, as commander of the military escort of the mission, and the able way he arranged many delicate matters, that would from time to time crop up in the dealing

with the various and often times ferocious tribes, which the mission encountered on its journey to and from Tibet, that there had not occurred one incident of friction that involved the firing of a single shot. The Gourkar soldiers acted splendidly, and were ever eager to carry out Sir Reginald's commands in every detail, so as to not incur in the least way his displeasure; so much, indeed, had these Gourkar soldiers become attached to Sir Reginald. And he, on his part, was ever scrupulously just and patient with them.

The government in recognition of his fine services accorded him their special thanks.

On reaching Calcutta, Sir Reginald found a large accumulation of letters awaiting him, and all of them needed his attention. The rentals from his estates had accumulated to such an extent, that his steward informed him that he had made many investments in mines, and other enterprises in the United States; and, further, that these investments had proved to be most profitable, and that the returns had far exceeded his anticipation. Sir Reginald found that, while he was away, the judicious investments made by his faithful steward of surplus funds had made him wealthier than ever. Wealth had never had but a passing interest for Sir Reginald. He was the least covetous of men, and his stringent instructions to his steward were, that no tenant of his should ever pay a rental that was in the least way a burden to him, and that his first consideration was the looking after the well-being of his tenantry.

Sir Reginald soon got into communication with Major Brosby. Colonel Tom Tom was away in England on leave of absence, and the Major was

stationed with the 110th at Umballa, and in temporary command of the regiment during his Colonel's absence. Sir Reginald decided to go to Umballa and spend a few days with his foster Uncle.

The two friends had a great deal to impart to each other, and many a night did they sit into the early hours of the morning, listening to the recitals of the various interesting incidents that had occurred to each during that period of separation. The Colonel having returned, Major Brosby insisted that Reginald should accompany him on a short visit to his mother, who at that time was living at Mahableshwa, a hill station near Bombay. Here Mrs. Brosby received her son and Sir Reginald with much motherly affection. Here also did Reginald find one of his mother's sisters, who had married an officer in the Indian Civil government. After spending two weeks at Mahableshwa, the two friends journeyed south to the Madras Presidency to visit a brother of the Major's, who was in the missionary field there, and a sister who was staying with him; and truly delighted were they to welcome the Major and Sir Reginald. All the Brosbys were greatly attached to Reginald and were genuinely glad to see him.

Having duly paid his respects to his mother's relatives, Captain Streetfield decided to take advantage of his regulation leave, which, under the special circumstances of his case, he could extend to two and a half years; and, as Colonel Tom Tom had returned to the command of his regiment, Sir Reginald prevailed upon the Major to apply for leave, too, and to accompany him to England. Leave was also obtained for Sergeant William Burke and Harry Brooks, as these two were, by

no means, to be denied accompanying their military superiors. Harry Brooks at this time had attained the rank of Color Sergeant. They had, through the influence of Colonel Tom Tom, and by their own meritorious services obtained as a special favor a temporary exemption from regimental duties, without pay, for the period of Major Brosby's and Reginald's leave.

They purposed to land at Marseilles, and to pass through France via Paris to England, for Sir Reginald devoutly desired to visit the grave of Veronica.

They reached Paris in due course; and after some difficulty, were finally able to learn something about the Dieulafois; being Huguenots, it was not hard to find the graveyard in which all of that faith had been buried. They found a really pretty little cemetery in a condition of thorough neglect, and the new caretaker, who had just succeeded to that position on the recent death of the old one, was unable to supply Sir Reginald with any information.

Monsieur Laudet having, as we have said, succeeded in getting Veronica's name removed from the cemetery record, Sir Reginald could find therein no record of her burial. Monsieur Laudet had not even placed a stone upon the grave of Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, although he had promised Josephine repeatedly to do so. Even the clergyman of the Huguenot faith who had read the funeral services over Veronica and her parents had recently died. There seemed no possible way open to Sir Reginald to procure any information bearing upon his wife's death and burial.

Over five years had passed, and with them

seemed to have vanished all traces of her life and of her death and burial in France. He very reluctantly and sadly gave up his search for her grave, and had to content himself by placing the matter in the hands of an agent with instructions to employ the cleverest detectives he could find. But Monsieur Laudet had done his work only too well. Even these men, clever though they were in tracing missing people, and following up clues, and unearthing and discovering deeply laid plots and solving mysteries, had to acknowledge themselves completely baffled. Some had even told the detectives that they had seen Veronica alive, long after the time she was supposed to have been buried. As the records had been destroyed, even those of Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, it was impossible to definitely locate the grave, and it would have practically meant the disinterment of a large number of people to verify the exact body. This was clearly out of the question, and Reginald had to abide by the decision of these detectives. Streetfield and Brosby returned to England disappointed and mystified by their want of success.

Once again Streetfield Manor had a master. Sir Reginald busied himself in attending to and disposing of the large amount of arrears of work that had accumulated during his long absence.

He found the good Dr. Sharpe well and hearty, although appearing older than when he last saw him over five years ago.

From Dr. Sharpe he obtained all the last sad details of his mother's death. But of Veronica, he was able to add nothing to what he had written Sir Reginald at the time of her death. Nor could he add any solution to the mystery of her last

resting place. Dr. Sharpe admonished Streetfield not to linger over all these melancholy details of his wife's unfortunate accident and death. This, Sir Reginald asserted he was striving to do.

The investments his steward had made in America had turned out, as stated before, very profitable and Sir Reginald was advised to invest all the funds he had at his disposal in the same enterprises.

Like his father before him, Sir Reginald consistently took a great deal of pains and labor to know and to be known by his tenants. This was so naturally congenial to him, the meeting of so many happy and appreciative families, that it afforded him a great deal of pleasure and gratification.

Sir Reginald Streetfield had now been home several months, and as the winter was approaching, and notwithstanding the fact that Major Brosby spent a large proportion of his time with him, he dreaded the advent of winter, with its long hours of shadow and darkness, so that when his London brokers suggested it would be as well for him to take a trip to the United States, and to acquire a personal knowledge of some of the properties in which he had so largely invested, Sir Reginald gladly fell in with their suggestion, and he succeeded in prevailing upon Major Brosby to accompany him. The Major confessed that time was beginning to hang heavily upon his hands, so without more ado, they had their trunks packed, and accompanied by their personal attendants, Harry Brooks and Will Burke, they sailed for New York en route to Colorado, Arizona, California, and Montana, in which states lay chiefly the properties

in which Sir Reginald had so largely invested.

This was the first visit of Major Brosby to the United States, and also of Harry Brooks and Will Burke. To all of them it was a journey replete with interest. Harry Brooks and Will Burke were impatient to learn whether their superior officers included Tennessee in their itinerary. As they were on tenter hooks, to meet their pal, Phil Knox, they were much pleased when Sir Reginald stated that he had written to Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox telling them that he wished to visit them. He had also written to Mr. Silas Thompson to the same effect.

Mrs. Wilcox, herself immediately replied and said that they would all regard it as a personal affront if Sir Reginald failed to make his contemplated visit, and most hospitably invited, both him and Major Brosby, to stay, as long as they possibly could, at the Wilcox plantation. This she did in her usual gracious manner. She added, however, that George was in Europe, as he had insisted upon going there, notwithstanding all their entreaties to the contrary, so that Sir Reginald would miss seeing him when he arrived at Great Hope.

Our visitors, there and then, decided to make Tennessee first, and postpone to a later date their itinerary. Sir Reginald thereupon notified Mrs. Wilcox to expect them at an early date.

Mr. Wilcox senior, with his usual generosity arranged to give the British officers a royal reception.

Of course, Miss Marry MacKenneth would be there with her father Angus MacKenneth, Mr. Silas Thompson, Dr. Vernon from Philadelphia, in

addition to these named, there would be a large circle of friends of the Wilcoxes, whom Sir Reginald had met in his last sojourn at the plantation, nearly six years before; all of whom were invited to the forthcoming reception and many others besides.

With such hearty southern hospitality were these Englishmen received, that Major Brosby, who had never before experienced the spontaneous hospitality and open-heartedness of his American cousins, was quite affected; and he could not help ejaculating to Streetfield: "By Jove, Streetfield, these American cousins of ours, I am proud of them! This is really remarkable!"

The interchange of greetings and the introductions being over, the company settled down to more solid themes of conversation.

Reginald was greatly delighted to see all his friends once more. He could not help remarking to himself, what a trio of lovely women were Miss Grace Wilcox (who notwithstanding her anxiety over George, looked unusually beautiful,) and Miss Emily Lawrence, and last but not least, Miss Mary MacKenneth. Mightily glad was he, indeed, to meet again Silas Thompson, and to be able to thank him personally for all his goodness and for the kindly interest he had taken in him and for his faithfulness in writing so regularly to him. Sir Reginald Streetfield could not help remarking to Silas Thompson what a wonderfully beautiful woman Mary had developed into, whereupon Silas rubbed his hands and exclaimed:

"How remarkable to be sure, Sir Reginald. How strange! How prodigious! Why Sir, she is so beautiful, that I have named her the Pride of Tennes-

see, and she is famed for her beauty all over Tennessee, and is now, in fact, referred to by all who know her, as the Pride of Tennessee."

There was no question as to the resplendent beauty of Mary, for if ever a woman looked radiant, Mary looked so that evening. She was genuinely pleased to see Sir Reginald again, and her irrepressible blushes reflected her gladness.

We may as well mention now as later that Mary had confided to her uncle Si, her refusal of the hand of Dr. Vernon, for which refusal Mary was unable to give him a tangible excuse, except the one she had given the doctor, and for which refusal, her Uncle Silas mildly took her to task; for he said, he did not want to see her settling down to old maidenhood; and who indeed, he asked, could she meet, that would in anyway be considered the superior, or even the equal, of the clever and rising young doctor, who belonged besides, he emphasized, to one of the oldest families in Tennessee.

To all of which remarks of her Uncle Si, Mary replied, in so bewitchingly facetious a manner, that Silas Thompson thought best to retire from his position, which was fast becoming untenable, under her clever *jeu de mots*. Dr. Vernon too had hastened to tell his story to Mr. Thompson, and Silas agreed fully with him, that it was utterly futile for him to entertain any hopes of ever winning Mary.

"I told you so, long ago, doctor, that you should look to the Wilcox home for a life partner; but you young men think, that we old fogey bachelors know nothing of the affairs of the heart."

Dr. Vernon had almost insensibly, since the day

of Mary's refusal of him, paid more attention to Grace Wilcox. Now that he had determined to think no more of Mary, he found himself being drawn towards Grace and it was within six months from the day of his refusal by Mary that he had asked Grace for her hand.

Grace Wilcox had passed through so much for her brother, that she often longed for someone to lean upon. Her father and mother, although sympathetic, were wont to severely censure George, and the tender feelings of Grace resented this. She was devotedly attached to him, and cognizant of the friendship that existed between George and Dr. Vernon, she had for some time leaned on him, and looked to him for sympathy and advice in matters relating to her brother George.

This naturally created a bond of sympathy between the Doctor and herself. Now that Dr. Vernon conscientiously considered himself heart whole and fancy free, he thought more and more about Grace, as he saw more of her.

Grace had many admirable traits, besides being a strikingly handsome woman. In addition to all these personal charms, she was very wealthy in her own name, and would doubtless inherit a large fortune from her parents, although the pecuniary consideration weighed not at all with Dr. Vernon, yet it made Grace Wilcox the most desirable young lady in Great Hope, and throughout that part of the state.

Several eligible young men had been very assiduous and persistent in their attentions to Grace Wilcox, but she did not evince any interest in any of them, and some of them had ardently pushed their suits, even to the point of proposing to Grace,

but she was too devoted to her brother George to think of marrying.

But in regard to Dr. Vernon, he seemed to stand in an altogether different light. He was an old-time, trusted and proved friend of the family, and especially of George, and to him, she considered, the family was under deep obligation.

Years ago, she almost fancied herself in love with him, but the doctor had never paid her any particular attention. Lately he had become more demonstrative, and Grace was conscious that her old affection for him was re-awakening. One morning, while strolling in the garden Dr. Vernon asked her if she would marry him, and Grace did not hesitate to accept him.

They went into the house, hand in hand, to find Grace's mother to tell her of their betrothal. Of course Mrs. Wilcox was glad to hear the news. She had relinquished, long ago, her ambition to marry Grace to Reginald Streetfield, when she heard that he had married Veronica, or to any other titled Englishman for that matter. Furthermore, she was greatly attached to Dr. Vernon, both as a physician, and as an old and trusted friend of the family.

Mary MacKenneth was one of the first to congratulate Grace and Dr. Vernon, and we may be sure, that Mr. Silas Thompson, too, was one of the first to congratulate Dr. Vernon and Grace, and he said to Dr. Vernon, "You will in future, I trust, Dr. Vernon, pay attention to what an old crusty bachelor says." And as to Grace, he still called her the party of the second part, and he said to her: "You were once the party of the second part to me, Miss Grace, but you will now become the party

of the first part to Dr. Vernon, and he will assume the more modest *role* of the party of the second part."

"Oh, you wretched man!" exclaimed Grace, jestingly. "You already presume that I am going to wield the scepter. You are wrong, Uncle Silas. Dr. Vernon will ever be the party of the first part to me, now and for evermore, and I am still to continue to be to you the party of the second part, as in the days of long ago."

When Sir Reginald learned of Dr. Vernon's good fortune, he heartily congratulated him, for he had always admired Grace Wilcox. But we have digressed and anticipated in our narrative and we shall have to revert to the reception tendered our two British guests.

Indeed, there was a great deal more before the guests than the mere meeting of people. Mr. Wilcox had arranged a banquet, whose sumptuousness and prodigality, was to rival that of Lady Travelyan at Reginald's wedding. The choicest of viands and wines were provided in abundance, and right merry did that party become, and speeches too were in order.

Mr. Wilcox senior, spoke, and so did Mr. Silas Thompson, and Dr. Vernon.

All the speakers made kindly references to the distingushed visitors. When Major Brosby was called upon to respond, Mr. Wilcox as chairman of the evening, requested him to make a few remarks as to the solidarity of the English speaking races of the world, which the gallant Major was well able to do.

The gallant Major, after many eulogistic remarks, regarding the wonderful country on this

side of the Atlantic, the foundation stones of which, he said, were laid by intrepid Britsh colonists, and that that fact should never be lost sight of and as these colonists, he contended, had elected to build up a great independent nation upon so solid a foundation, that that foundation in itself was a guarantee of its perpetuation. In regard to the union of all the English speaking countries, that he said, already existed, and there was no necessity for putting that into the bond. That the bond between the two great English-speaking peoples can exist only on the highest and most altruistic principles and ideals; that the traditions represented to the British people by the Crown and flag, both of which had existed a thousand years, and that the Crown in particular in all those years, with but very few exceptions, had drawn from the British people, their truest and their best. (And this he wished, he said, to parenthetically emphasize. The greatest function of the Crown was to draw to the foot of the throne the best of the nation to help in its good government). So, in like manner, the Stars and Stripes of America must draw forth the truest and the best in the American people to help in the good government of the nation. In short, the two nations must ever remain True Blue, each to their own glorious traditions, and as long as they continued to do so, they were as firmly united as nations can ever be united. True Blues can never have a falling out. It is the same yesterday, today and forever, the world over. When nations went to war, he argued, it was owing to one or the other of them, or both of them, ceasing to live up to the highest ideals of humanity. Therefore, he concluded, as long as England

and America remain true blue, they were indissolubly united; but if one or the other of them, or both of them, became recreant to their traditions and ideals, that very moment, the alliance ceased, no matter how arranged, and whether written on paper or not. True Blue, he said, is essentially a spiritual essence, and if both nations evolved the same spiritual qualities, they were one and indissoluble, even though they were divided by three thousand miles of sea, and were living under different constitutions. The form of these constitutions, he maintained, was immaterial, the crucial test was, he emphasized, "Did they evolve the spiritual?" He begged to drink to the 'Stars and Stripes' of America, and to the 'Crown and Union Jack' of the Old Land, "and may they both," he said, "*remain True Blue forever.*"

Sir Reginald Streetfield had to say something, which he did in his usual sincere and dignified manner, supplementing the remarks of his senior officer, Major Brosby.

The gathering finally broke up, long past the hour of midnight, and the guests went home greatly impressed with the bearing and the remarks of the British officers, the Wilcoxes being highly commended and complimented by everyone on the great success of the reception.

The meeting between Miss Mary MacKenneth and Sir Reginald Streetfield had been one of genuine pleasure, and Sir Reginald, for the first time since the untimely death of Veronica felt an awakening of his dormant affections. The full womanhood of Mary came upon Sir Reginald as a surprise, he had known her as a vivacious, ingenuous and frank girl; and even at that time, he had felt

a certain regard for her, and it appeared now as though that regard had been re-kindled.

As for Mary, her self-consciousness, which she vainly endeavored to conceal, caused a bright color to suffuse her cheeks, and a radiant expression to blossom on her countenance.

Major Brosby was by no means an idle bystander. He entered very heartily into the spirit of the re-union and listened with much interest to the little tales and reminiscences that were constantly cropping up. Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox and Grace he had met before at Reginald's wedding. He felt therefore to some extent, that he was in the company of old friends. His chivalrous nature and his soldierly bearing, made an excellent impression wherever he went. He had taken in the whole situation, without apparently being conscious of what was going on. He had particularly noticed the frank and happy meeting between Reginald and Mary and he forthwith made a mental note of the same.

"I will bet myself ten pounds Sir Reginald does take up with Miss Mountain Beauty, the ten pounds to go to charity if I lose," he communed with himself. "Dr. Vernon and Miss Grace Wilcox are so radiantly happy in each other's company," he further communed, saying to himself, "Brosby, you are going to see something break out here."

After spending a few days at the Wilcoxes, he noticed that Dr. Vernon invariably paired off with Miss Grace, and Sir Reginald with Mary, and he began to feel that he ought to pair off too. To be sure, there was nobody but Miss Emily Lawrence, and it would be altogether at variance with his

chivalrous nature not to be attentive to her, considering that they were so designedly left to themselves.

Major Brosby was an excellent entertainer, which Emily soon learned. His fund of stories of adventures of all sorts, his irrepressible good humor and good nature, and his hearty infectious laugh, together with his handsome, earnest face and his soldierly bearing, were not without effect upon Emily.

One night, when alone with Sir Reginald, Major Brosby broke the ice by abruptly saying to him, "I tell you what, Reggie, you go in and win Mary MacKenneth, and I will jump in and win Emily Lawrence. By George, that girl interests me, you know, Streetfield."

Had Sir Reginald been shot, he could not have been more surprised and taken aback.

He had to admit that he found himself drifting into dangerous waters with Mary, but he never dreamed of anybody else observing it. It seemed inexpressibly funny, to him, to hear of his old friend Major Brosby, the incorrigible bachelor, going in for a flirtation. "Well, I'll be blowed, Brosby! What on earth has possessed you to make such a proposal?" asked Reginald.

"I cannot help seeing what I see, Reggie. You may not want to admit it, but you may just as well. You are in love with Mary MacKenneth, anybody with half an eye can see that, and she is dead gone on you, as we say in the army. Take my predicament, Reggie; there is Vernon everlastingly off somewhere with Grace Wilcox, and you are off in the same manner with Mary MacKenneth, and there is nothing left for that unfortunate Emily

Lawrence but to pair off with an old stick like myself. Not so very old either, Reggie, begging my own pardon. I have been fifteen years in Her Majesty's service and have yet to travel four milestones before I reach forty. Well, I was about to say to you, that your conduct is simply atrocious; and by George, what do I find myself doing, but saying soft nothings and empty nothing-at-alls to that poor girl. I find that she seems to enjoy my society, and by jove, Reggie, to tell you the truth, I am beginning to enjoy her society; so I said to myself, go in old cock-a-lorum and win if you can. But first I must have an understanding with you. I would not for the whole world go back to England with a bud from Tennessee, unless you do ditto. What say you, old man—is it a go? I have called the cards, now show me your hand."

Sir Reginald could not keep from bursting into a loud laugh. All this was said by the Major, in so earnest a tone, that it struck the sense of the ridiculous in Reginald.

"This is no laughing matter with me, Reggie," retorted the Major. "It is the first attack in my life, sir, and by Gad I believe it is going to be a very serious one."

Sir Reginald Streetfield was serious again in a moment. "Pardon me, Brosby, I do not mean to be light-witted in this matter; but it is so sudden, you know, to quote an old saying. You are right, Brosby, you have called my cards. Like an honorable player, I will lay them on the table. You are right about my loving Mary. I did not fully realize it until you called me to myself just now, and I am sure, as you are, that Mary loves me."

"Major, I am going to ask her to be my wife.

God knows I have been true in thought, word and deed to the memory of dear Veronica. I know that if she were conscious of this moment, she would wish for my happiness. I do not consider, Brosby, that I am doing her memory any violence by asking Mary to take her place," said Sir Reginald with deep feeling.

"You will be doing your dead wife a grave injustice, if you do not, Reggie. Besides, you will be doing Mary MacKenneth a far graver injustice and wrong. You have to bring the matter to a climax. If you agree, I will do the same with Emily. Here goes," earnestly rejoined the Major.

"You are the last one in the world I ever thought would be captivated by a woman, Major, but you have my best wishes. Emily is a beautiful and highly accomplished girl. I was told years ago that she was intended for George Wilcox. These two families wished to become connected, and they thought of marrying their children, but since George's bad behavior, I hear that Emily has entirely repudiated him. You therefore need have no scruples on that score. Go in and win, Brosby. I wish you all kinds of luck, and here is my hand upon it. Do you know that Mary MacKenneth is known in these parts as the Pride of Tennessee? I must win that Pride while you win that beautiful and chaste flower, Emily Lawrence. Let us say no more about it, Brosby. Here, shake hands and good night," concluded Reginald, half seriously and half humorously.

The next day Sir Reginald went to see Silas Thompson at the village of Great Hope. He had already visited Great Hope and Silas on several occasions and had shaken hands with many of his

good friends among the villagers, whom he had known on his first visit years ago, not omitting the kindly Mat Stephens. Glad too, were they all, to see him.

His coming, therefore, was not a surprise to Silas Thompson, and what Sir Reginald had to say to him was not altogether in the nature of a surprise. Sir Reginald had come to him, he said, to make his confession, as he called it, regarding his settled intention of asking Mary to marry him. But Reginald found that the astute lawyer had anticipated him in that knowledge. Silas Thompson listened to what Reginald had to say, and then he said, somewhat abruptly: "Of course, Sir Reginald, you will ask Mary to be you wife. You cannot do otherwise, unless you wish to break the heart of the Pride of Tennessee." Silas Thompson then related to Sir Reginald, the refusal by Mary of the hand of Dr. Vernon, and that he had gleaned from that fact and other little incidents, that Mary's heart was not free to give, as it should be given, to the man she promised to marry. "Mary is coming to see me tomorrow and you had better come too, Sir Reginald, and you can, both of you, fix the matter up in your own way to suit yourselves. From the looks of things, I do not anticipate any very great difficulty. Mary, I know, respects and admires you and though perhaps her innate sense of modesty, which she possesses to a very high degree, would prevent her from allowing her admiration to pass into love without some expression on your part, it would need but a spark to kindle her admiration into a glowing flame of love. There, Sir Reginald, I am actually growing

poetical over your love affairs. I will say nothing more."

To Silas Thompson, Mary had been a rare and priceless plant that he had nourished and guarded from her earliest years. There had grown up between them a great bond of sympathy and affection, and now to realize that so good a man as Sir Reginald wanted her, made him feel inexpressibly happy.

Apart altogether, from Sir Reginald's rank and station in life, which were of course of great consideration, Silas Thompson had, from his first meeting with Sir Reginald, been drawn towards him. His frankness and utter absence of anything approaching self-assertion and conceit, his genial, hearty and sincere manner, instantly awakened in Silas a liking and a warm friedship for him.

It rather amused Silas Thompson to think of his Mary as Lady Streetfield; but nothng, he felt convinced, in this world was too good or too lofty for Mary. He would muse on the pride and happiness that it would have given Mary's beloved mother, had she been alive, to witness the marriage of her daughter to so honorable a man, and an English baronet.

Angus MacKenneth, Silas felt assured would gladly give his consent to Mary accepting the baronet, because he knew from Mr. Angus MacKenneth's own expressions that he entertained a very high regard for Sir Reginald.

The next day Sir Reginald, according to his arrangement with Silas Thompson, went to see him at Great Hope, and of course Mary was there, and of course Silas must needs excuse himself, and of course Aunt Janet had to go to market, and so it

was that Mary and Reginald were left quite alone.

Sir Reginald was the very last one she expected to see, which was indeed the truth, as Silas Thompson had said nothing to her about Sir Reginald being there that day. How did it happen that he had come to see Uncle Si?

But Sir Reginald was very poor at any attempt at dissimulation. He blurted out that Mr. Thompson had asked him over, and really, before he was aware of what he was doing, he had asked Mary to be his wife, and was holding her unresistingly in his arms.

What these two lovers said to each other during those two hours which pased before Uncle Silas returned would fill many a page in this volume. But it is sufficient to say, that they had gone over all their past lives, and had even attempted to delve into the future, and to talk about the happiness of the days to come.

Strange to say, Silas Thompson, when he returned was accompanied by Angus MacKenneth, so there was nothing else for Sir Reginald to do but to frankly tell Mr. MacKenneth that he had asked Mary to be his wife, and that she had consented, and he was now only to ask his consent.

Angus MacKenneth was naturally surprised. He realized for some time that some young man would come some day, from somewhere, and take his Mary away from him, and now to learn that she had secured the love of such a man as Sir Reginald Streetfield, and a British baronet besides, he could not help but feel greatly mollified (by these very evident facts and auspicious circumstances) at the prospect of his losing his Mary.

"Well, lass," he said to Mary, "you are at last

going to leave your dad. It is well that it is so. Your Mother did the same thing before you; and as for you, Sir Reginald Streetfield, I am proud, indeed, sir, to give you the hand of my daughter in marriage; and perhaps I ought not to say it, being the father of the girl, you have won, sir, one of the purest and brightest gems that this country has ever produced."

Mr. Silas Thompson having seen everything settled, to his entire satisfaction and Aunt Janet having returned, and being told the good news, and having expressed herself as being as happy as she ever could be in this world, or ever expected to be in the next; and moreover, having prepared a most inviting lunch for the party, and the party having consumed that lunch; and after Silas Thompson declaring that this was the happiest circumstance in his whole life, he suggested to the lovers that they cut their sticks, as he not very euphonistically but humorously put it, and hurry back to the Wilcox plantation and tell them there the wonderful news, which was, indeed, too good to keep.

Mary, having kissed her father, and her Uncle Si, and Aunt Janet, good-bye, jumped into the buggy as she did years ago, when she was a child, and drove away with Reginald.

They need have to go all over that scene again, and thus did this happy pair wend their way, not too rapidly, you may be sure. After a slow but certainly not a tedious journey, they arrived at the Wilcox residence and entered it together.

They had no sooner done so when Grace Wilcox spied them and hastened towards them saying, "Surely you have not come to tell me the news at this late hour of the day?"

To this query Mary and Sir Reginald did not know what to say, because they both wondered how on earth their secret could have reached the Wilcox residence in so short a time. Of course they concluded that the news referred to by Grace was their engagement, and that she had humorously put her question in that way. Mary was the first to break the silence.

"How did you know about it, Grace, dear?" she asked in a surprised tone.

"I heard it of course, Mary. Everybody in the house knows about it," answered Grace."

"Why, who has been telling you, Grace? Surely Uncle Si could not have reached here in so short a time—I know. You must have just guessed it," exclaimed Mary.

"Uncle Silas? What has Uncle Silas got to do with it? And you say I have guessed it," said Grace in astonishment. "No such thing, Mary, he told me himself."

"He told you himself?" repeated Mary. It was her turn now to be astonished, and turning to Sir Reginald, she said to him: "How could you have told Grace, Sir Reginald, you have never been out of my sight?"

"Sir Reginald never told me, Mary. What strange things you say. Major Brosby told me himself, of course," rejoined Grace, still amazed.

This was a greater puzzle than ever to Mary and Sir Reginald.

"How the deuce? Please excuse my using that expression, Miss Wilcox, but it really meets the situation. How the deuce did Major Brosby get to know?" asked Sir Reginald as he saw that Mary was quite nonplussed.

"How the deuce did Major Brosby know?" answered Grace, mimicking Sir Regnald's tone. "Why a man ought to know when he has proposed to a girl, and has been accepted by her; and as you two seem to be so superlatively impervious (none so deaf as those who do not want to hear, you know). I am going to tell you anyhow, simply, clearly, and explicitly as I can. Major Brosby has told me that he proposed to Emily and that Emily has accepted him. Now do you comprehend?

All this seemed so inexpressibly funny to Mary and to Sir Reginald that they could not refrain from breaking out into a hearty laugh.

This added all the more to Grace's bewilderment and surprise at, what appeared to her, their extraordinary behavior, and we must confess that she felt a little resentful, for she said in a hurt tone, "Really now, Mary, and Sir Reginald Streetfield, it doesn't seem to me that there is anything to laugh at."

"But, Grace, it is such a strange coincidence," said Mary in a mollifying voice.

"I do not see anything strange or coincidental in the matter. I really cannot make out what both of you are driving at," returned Grace, still incensed. "And there is Sir Reginald Streetfield apparently unable to stop laughing, even when he sees I am really angry."

"There now, Grace, dear, come, and I will whisper in your ear so that Sir Reginald will not hear me." And going up to Grace Mary whispered in her ear, "Sir Reginald and I are engaged to be married. He asked me this morning at Uncle Silas Thompson's."

It was now Grace's turn to see the ludicrous side of the *contretemps* and she broke into a peal of laughter. It was now Mary's turn to feel hurt while Sir Reginald looked on in wonderment.

"It is not a matter for you to laugh at so heartily, Grace," said Mary in a hurt tone.

"Why, Mary, if one is not supposed to laugh at this one cannot then laugh at anything, and one must be quite bereft of any sense of humor," said Grace, trying vainly to suppress her laughter.

"I cannot really see anything to laugh at, Grace," said Mary in a resentful if not angry tone.

"Oh, you stupid, stupid girl! Do you really imagine for a moment that I am laughing at the news you gave me? No, dear, I was laughing at my own stupid mistake, and the way you and Sir Reginald got mixed up. Of course, I am glad indeed to hear it. Won't you let me kiss you and wish you all happiness?" said Grace in pacifying tones, with which she fondly embraced and kissed Mary again and again. She then shook hands cordially with Sir Reginald, saying to him as she did so:

"So you have come into our country and stolen the Pride of Tennessee?—Was it not excruciatingly funny, mixed up as we all were?" and Grace started laughing again, in which Mary and Sir Reginald joined; and they continued laughing so heartily that Mrs. Wilcox came out to see what was the matter, and Grace in her own delightfully serio-comic way, recounted to her mother all that happened; and, of course, Mrs. Wilcox could not help but laugh heartily too. She kissed Mary, and congratulated both of them; and after that, they all laughed together, when Grace reiterated the

parts that each of them had played. Mary's and Sir Reginald's bewilderment; then her own bewilderment and her anger; and then Mary's amusement and her anger, and then her own amusement and Mary's anger; and as they were about to start laughing again Major Brosby and Emily came upon the scene, and the sight of them added fuel to the fire, and for the life of them, these four, could not help but break out into peal after peal of laughter, much to the consternation of Major Brosby, and the evident distress of Emily. Mr. Albert Wilcox, who had just come in and hearing the loud peals of laughter, asked the Major what was the occasion of it all and he could only say that something, surpassingly strange had happened to the family and to Sir Reginald Streetfield. Mr. Wilcox hurried into the room to find out what really was the matter, but his presence only added to the roar of laughter. Mr. Wilcox himself became really alarmed, and almost concluded that a sudden fit of insanity had seized the household. It was a strangely grotesque nevertheless an alarming picture.

Mr. Wilcox was so bewildered that he could say nothing. Major Brosby was silent too, excepting when he at intervals exclaimed, "By George, this is strange! By jove, what can be the matter?" until poor Emily, unable any longer to contain her distress, burst into tears. This had the desired effect, and they all stopped laughing in a moment. This antithesis, the distress and tears of Emily, acted like an antidote to their laughter.

Then the three ladies, Mrs. Wilcox, Grace, and Mary, had to press around Emily, to kiss her, to caress her, and to heap many congratulations upon

her; and Mary told Emily of her engagement to Sir Reginald, and it was now Emily's turn to kiss and congratulate Mary.

In the meanwhile the three gentlemen, Mr. Wilcox, Major Brosby, and Sir Reginald, were grouped together.

Reginald congratulated Brosby; and Reginald had to tell the Major of his own engagement; the Major, of course, had to congratulate Reginald. The conversation in these two distinct groups, grew more and more animated. Mary was speaking of her engagement, and Emily of hers, and Reginald was telling Brosby, and Brosby was telling Reginald. What indeed did Grace then do, but she called to the group of men and said:

"What is the matter with you, father? Why do you keep Major Brosby and Sir Reginald all to yourself? Come and join us. I want to tell you, dad, all that happened just now, and Emily too, for she has not heard quite the whole story."

The gentlemen then joined the ladies, and congratulations had to be passed again and when these were over what needs Miss Grace do, but had to tell the story of the laughter all over again, in her irresistibly funny way.

She recounted the whole scene from the time that Mary and Reginald came in to the moment Emily burst into tears.

This had the effect of setting them all to laughing again, more particularly Mr. Wilcox and Emily, and Major Brosby, for they had not heard the full story. Indeed they were a happy and a merry group.

"I am ten pounds better off than I was, Reggie," said the Major, when they retired for the night.

"How so, Major?" asked Sir Reginald.

"It is just this way. After witnessing the first meeting between Mary MacKenneth and yourself, I bet myself ten pounds that you would be shortly engaged to Mary, the ten pounds to go to some eleemosynary institution if I lost."

"I am sorry, Major, for that eleemosynary institution, but I am delighted at the same time that you won your bet."

We have been so busy with recounting the good fortune of Dr. Vernon, Major Brosby, and Sir Reginald, that we have not said a word about our three gallant and trusty musketeers, Phil Knox, Harry Brooks, and Will Burke.

These three met again under the favoring winds of Providence for Phil Knox had accompanied Dr. Vernon to the Wilcoxes. Ample accommodation was found for them by Mr. Wilcox senior. He had assigned to them a commodious and comfortably furnished cottage, which in the days of slavery was occupied by the supervisor of the Wilcox plantations and had since been kept in good order. Mr. Wilcox often housed some of his guests in this cottage when those guests at his plantation home, who stayed over night, were too many, which was indeed not an infrequent occurrence.

But be that as it may, our three musketeers were safely established there and a darkey servant was assigned to look after their comforts, and to supply them with all they needed, liquid and otherwise.

After a few days' stay at the Wilcox plantation, Burke and Brooks obtained permission to accompany Phil Knox on a visit to his mountaineer friends. He had pledged his word to them that he

would bring with him his two British comrades, when he paid them his promised visit, so under his guidance and guardianship did the three musketeers, having first secured the necessary horses from the generous Mr. Wilcox, make their way towards the mountains.

The mountaineers having been already advised of their coming, gathered in large numbers to give Phil and his two friends a right royal welcome. Bill Burke and Harry Brooks with their genial and free and easy manner, soon established themselves in the good graces of these kind-hearted and open-minded people, who lived so close to nature, and who apparently blend in their character something of the ruggedness, the sternness, the grandeur, and the wild freedom of their surroundings. There was one particular section of these mountains which the people had for years appropriated and utilized as a meeting place and a pleasure ground. This spot was inaccessible to those who were not conversant with the topography of that locality.

The meeting place was an open space of about four acres in extent, surrounded on all sides by massive boulders of earth and rock which constituted a veritable natural amphitheatre. This open space was covered with poplar, magnolia, pine, and locust trees, which afforded in summer a grateful shelter and shade. The surrounding boulders were deeply indentated at their base and jutting forward as they did, formed crevices which were caves in reality, and some of large proportion. These caves were occupied as temporary habitations by the mountaineers and their friends whenever they assembled there for festive and other occasions.

Here they would often bring their wives and their children and would tarry some days, having brought with them such provisions as they deemed necessary. Not far from this spot a goodly sized mountain cascade afforded excellent bathing facilities, and supplied all the pure water needed for drinking and culinary purposes. There were many of these caves and most of them could readily be occupied by a family, affording ample shelter, and all that privacy called for.

It was to this spot that our three musketeers were escorted, and there Burke and Brooks met all the old and tried friends of Phil Knox, and they were enchanted with and fairly reveled in the natural beauty of this sylvan and mountain fastness. There were no less than twenty families to do honor to our three heroes. Burke and Brooks being single men, and remarkably fine looking men at that, found great favor in the eyes of the mountain lassies, some of whom were very comely indeed, while others exhibited the effects of the hard and strenuous life of those who eke out a living upon the mountain sides and are perennially exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and besides, are compelled to exist for the most part upon meager and coarse fare. All these conditions had had a tendency to give them spareness, angularity, and length of body; and thus it has come about that many of these mountain lasses show clearly angular characteristics of countenance and figure. No matter whether angular or comely, spare or buxom, the conduct of the two British visitors was chivalrous to a fault.

One of the caves was assigned to the three visitors, the floor of which was covered with dried

moss, over which blankets were spread, constituting fairly comfortable beds.

Here in this beautiful and sequestered nook did they stay for all of four days. Beginning with the hour of daylight, our trio would, with the mountaineers, enjoy a bath at the cascade, by standing directly beneath the falling waters; and they would then accompany their friends through the woods, and over the glens, hunting for squirrels and other edible fauna, indigenous to those forests and mountains. Getting an early start, they would return at noon, hungry as hunters, (for that they really were) to a most plenteous and wholesome meal of the best that these moonshiners could afford and these mountains produce, served in the open space, to be found in the center of this cluster of trees. After the midday meal the women would retire, leaving the men smoking around an open fire, because it was getting chilly now, and the mountaineers would recount to their visitors many an interesting episode and tale of mountain life. Then would be brought forth from somewhere a demijohn of good, pure, mountain whiskey, of which the men partook freely and heartily, and here, indeed, was one occasion in which Phil Knox could easily out-distance his British friends. "You are British soldiers," he would say to them, "and you have been to war. But when it comes to moonshine, Burke and Brooks, why I have you backed clean off the board." Burke and Brooks really did try to uphold and maintain the prestige of the British soldier, and did their utmost to keep pace with Phil Knox, but we have sadly to confess, that they were compelled on one afternoon, to seek the se-

clusion of their cave. "We have learned our lesson," Burke said to Phil, "and never again shall we attempt to rival or even question your superior capacity for partaking of mountain whiskey." And our two heroes never did again transgress in that direction. They had learned the potency of moonshine, they said, and now well knew how to regulate their consumption of it.

Phil Knox had told the mountaineers all about Burke and Brooks and the Afridis war in India, and of the wonderful valor displayed by Burke, and how he had won the most coveted military distinction in the world, the Victoria Cross; and Will Burke had to go over those exciting incidents of that military action, and there was always somebody who did not hear him tell the story and would insist upon having it told all over again.

In the late afternoon, the ladies would gather in the open space, and there would be dancing, for one small section of that area had been set aside and beaten and smoothed down to make it fairly suitable for that pastime. Here it was that William Burke and Harry Brooks excelled. Dancing with the ladies, young and old, comely and angular, lean and stout, until the ladies themselves said, that they had never met with in all their lives such wonderfully pleasing and good-natured men. The music was supplied by one who played the concertina, and by another who fiddled. After the dancing would come supper, and excellent coffee would be handed around in huge cups, and anybody could have as many cups as he wanted. There were corn cakes, and other delicate and tastefully prepared dishes; and after supper they would all sit around the large open fire on heaps of dried moss,

placed there for the occasion, the men smoking their pipes and cigars, and the women with their younger children nestling on their laps. Then someone would sing. A man perhaps, in a deep, stentorian voice, or a woman, in sweet, plaintive tones. This would encourage others. Nor were Bill Burke and Harry Brooks backward in coming forward, and they sang too. Some of the women had wonderfully sweet voices indeed, and they would sing with much feeling and pathos, many of the Moody and Sankey hymns, such as *In the Sweet By and By*, *Hold the Fort*, *We Shall Gather at the River*, and *Scatter Seeds of Kindness*, in which the men would lustily join, although moonshiners each and every one of them. "Perhaps more appropriate would it be did they sing *Scatter Drops of Kindness*," whispered Bill Burke to Phil Knox in his inimitable Irish way.

Our British boys certainly had a good time, and enjoyed every minute of it, and both of them would lose their hearts several times each day, only to recover them when they retired for the night into their cavernous lodgings with Phil Knox, who expressed it as his opinion that the only thing that saved his British friends from the dire calamity of matrimony was the number of the really pretty and buxom young women they met.

"You boys," he said to them, "cannot really make up your minds as to the one you would like to propose to." It was even seriously suggested to William Burke and Harry Brooks that they stay up in the mountains for ever and ever, and give up all thoughts of going back to England. But Burke and Brooks were too well disciplined and

had too great a regard for their duty to be induced to prolong their stay by any mountain Delilah, be she ever so alluring.

Never, said Burke, had he had such a wonderful visit, and never would he forget the big-heartedness of these kindly people, and the rare and natural grace of the ladies. "Do you wonder now at my being attached to these mountaineers?" demanded Phil Knox to Will Burke one day, "apart from any fondness that I possess for the really fine whiskey they manufacture."

These were indeed four wonderful days, after which the party dispersed, each family to its own home. Our three musketeers having got ready their horses, (which, by the way, were well taken care of by the mountaineers), they bade their hospitable hosts a hearty farewell many of whom would insist on accompanying them on horseback some distance on their homeward journey.

Thus ended, the three musketeers said, one of the most enjoyable episodes of their lives, almost rivalling that, Phil Knox said, of the Chateau d'Eaulant, when he had taken such exquisite delight in holding a revolver to the head of Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, and had threatened to plug him, because, as he said at the time to that French gentleman, he looked like a revenue officer.

CHAPTER XII

A VILLAINOUS PLOT

Mr. George Wilcox still remained in Paris, and Emily wished to marry before his return, which might take place at any time, and Major Brosby saw little purpose in delay, so they decided that their wedding should take place at once. Dr. Vernon and Grace Wilcox having decided also on an early marriage, arrangements were made for a double event.

Sir Reginald and Mary purposed to be quietly married in New York at an early date. As the day approached, the prospective bride and groom left for that city, accompanied by Mr. Angus Mackenneth, Mr. and Mrs. and Grace Wilcox, and Emily Lawrence, Mr. Silas Thompson, Dr. Vernon, Major Brosby and our three musketeers, who had elected to accompany their masters in order, as they jestingly said to them, to look to their comfort and to protect them from the snares of any possible American Laudet. Sir Reginald had asked the Rev. Dr. Sharpe to come to the States to witness his marriage. To this the good doctor readily assented.

Reginald and Mary were quietly and unostentatiously married at St. John's church, New York, the Rev. Dr. Sharpe being present as arranged. This was his first visit to the States, and he was much interested in noticing the many, to him, novel habits and customs of the people; he expressed himself as greatly gratified by the warm welcome he received from everybody at the Wil-

cox Plantation, where he was to make his home during his stay in America.

Dr. Sharpe was glad to learn of Reginald's intention to marry again, for he felt that that would be the opening of a new vista of life for Reginald, and when he saw Mary, he was more than ever convinced of the wisdom of Reginald's decision.

Major Brosby, not to be outdone in any way by his fellow officer and his junior to boot as he facetiously put it, prevailed upon the Rev. Dr. Sharpe to postone his departure and honor Emily and himself by witnessing their marriage as well. It is unnecessary to say that the double event was a gala affair, and as such was long remembered by the inhabitants of that neighborhood. The Wilcoxes having a wide circle of acquaintances, many invitations had been issued.

The Major appeared to great advantage in the full dress of an officer in the British army, and as for Dr. Vernon the noble expression of his highly intellectual features was greatly enhanced by the happy glow that effused his countenance. As to the brides, whatever we may say, or can say, would be altogether too inadequate to describe the bewitching beauty of their costume and the radiance of their own happy faces.

The ceremony over, with all its accompanying festivities, the Major and his bride, and Dr. Vernon and his bride left for parts unknown.

The Major and Reginald had considerable more than a year to the good, in the matter of their leave of absence. On the Major's return from his honeymoon, they decided to stay in Tennessee until the expiration of their leave. They thereupon secured suitable residences in the neighbor-

hood of Great Hope and purposed settling down until their leave of absence expired, to live as Tennessee gentlemen, for such indeed they now almost considered themselves.

Thus did these happy couples spend many happy days. Often did they arrange a meeting between themselves—a get-together party as it were, and many a merry laugh did they have when Grace recounted the incidents of the afternoon when Sir Reginald came over to the Wilcox residence to announce their engagement. The Major had solemnly asserted more than once, as an excuse doubtless for his own want of acumen, that Solomon and Socrates themselves would have been perplexed at that extremely stupid and amusing *contretemps.*

Some months had now passed since Sir Reginald's wedding, and his cup of happiness was filled to overflowing when Mary one morning whispered in his ear, telling him of the wonderful and hallowed mystery which was destined to bind their lives closer than ever. Sir Reginald decided that his son and heir be born on American soil, for, he said, half humorously, half seriously, "Who knows but that he might become eligible for the presidency of the Great Republic in years to come? Stranger things than that have happened." He reasoned that his son being born on American soil, did not in any way detract from his succession to the title and estates of Streetfield. He wanted his son, he said, to have such measure of American citizenship obtained through his mother, as well as that acquired from the circumstances of his being born on American soil. It was decided that Sir Reginald and Mary would remain in the United States for some time to

come. "Nobody would venture to predict," concluded Sir Reginald, sententiously, "as to what the conditions of the world would be fifty years hence."

Quickly passed the happy months, until one morning Sir Reginald was able to herald the good news that a son and heir was born to the house of Streetfield. The news was cabled to the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, and to the steward of the Streetfield estates, who was instructed to spare no pains or money on the festivities he was directed to inaugurate in honor of the event.

Now came the naming of the little heir, and Mary, with a delicacy of feeling worthy of herself, insisted that he be called William, knowing as she did the profound veneration Reginald held of his father's memory.

William was the most wonderful baby in the world, so thought indeed Sir Reginald and Mary, and Angus MacKenneth, the grandfather, and Silas Thompson. Never a day passed, but when Mr. Thompson was at liberty that he failed to call and see Mary's wonderful child, and he took inexpressible pleasure in tracing in the child the features and resemblance not only to Mary, but also to Mary's sainted mother.

William Burke, the military valet of Sir Reginald, declared that he put in the first claim upon the child for her Majesty's 110th foot regiment; and when Phil Knox came over, as he did when Dr. Vernon and Grace paid their respects and added their personal congratulations to the happy parents, he, Phil Knox, declared that he was now perfectly happy, for he could sing, without any one daring to question his patriotism, "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "Brittania Rule the Waves," and he further declared that this child

had surely helped to bring the two great English-speaking peoples together.

When little William was four months old, a bolt was shot from a clear blue sky, over which there appeared not even a shadow of a cloud. Indeed, it would have been hard to have anticipated any misfortune outside of sickness, accident or the elements that could have thrown a shadow upon that happy household. The source from which the blow originated was absolutely outside the range of human perception. Yet a blow was struck and a deadly blow at that.

This household, so happy, Mary with her baby and her husband, the best, the truest, and the most noble of men, and her revered father, the soul of integrity and honor, and dear old kindly Uncle Silas Thompson (Uncle Silas, as even Reginald now addressed him, to be in keeping with Mary, he said), that this household should be struck by so cruel a blow, seemed a travesty of justice.

This is what had come upon Sir Reginald Streetfield and his household, and we shall relate the manner of its coming.

Mr. Silas Thompson early one morning called upon Sir Reginald and Mary. Sir Reginald immediately saw that Uncle Silas was preoccupied and constrained, notwithstanding his efforts to appear unconcerned and affable. He succeeded in deceiving Mary, but not so Reginald.

"How is our little man today, Sir Reginald?" asked Silas Thompson, assuming a cheery voice.

"He is just splendid. I do not believe that there was ever a boy like him. He is growing like a weed. Go in and see them. I am on my way to the stables. Bill Burke was here to say that one

of our horses was taken ill during the night, and the veterinary was summoned. I am going to the stables to find out what is the matter," replied Reginald.

"Will you stay there while I go in and see the little man and Mary? I'll join you in a few minutes," said Silas Thompson.

"All right, Uncle Si. You know where to find me, that is, if you do not tarry too long with that wonderful boy of ours," replied Sir Reginald.

Silas went into the house, while Reginald strolled toward the stables, and Silas Thompson, after satisfying himself as to the well-being of little William and Mary, hastened to meet Sir Reginald.

Sir Reginald divined from Silas Thompson's expression and actions that he had something of moment to say to him, and he concluded that something dreadful had happened to George Wilcox and that he, Silas Thompson, not wanting to unduly alarm Mary, had thought it best to break the news to him at first.

"Come, Uncle Silas," he said. "What bad news have you? I can tell from your expression that you have something to say of an unpleasant nature. If I may venture a guess, I will warrant that it has some reference to George Wilcox. He is the only disquieting factor in our lives."

"You have a very clear perception, I see, sir. It is news of George, and something that will closely affect yourself, your wife, and your child," replied Silas Thompson.

"Affect Mary, and the boy, and myself?" echoed Sir Reginald in a surprised tone, and he added, "How can that be? Is he dead? Poor fellow! That indeed is ardently to be wished, not only for

his own sake, but as well as that of his parents. Unfortunate Wilcox! He was a good and chivalrous man once. We were very close friends. I still have a very great regard for him, notwithstanding his recent behavior."

"I wish I could say that he was dead, and that that was all the bad news," rejoined Silas, in saddened tones. "Or that he were in prison, or killed or blinded, or paralyzed. Anything but what I have to say. No sir. Unfortunately for yourself, Mary, and the child, he is quite well."

"You talk in enigmas, Uncle Silas. I cannot imagine how Mary, the boy, or myself can be affected in the most remotely possible way, by any of the actions of George Wilcox."

"That is just it, that is just it, Sir Reginald. It is a terrible blow, sir, a terrible blow."

"Now, come, Uncle Silas," said Reginald, smiling in spite of himself, at the serious and distressed expression of Mr. Thompson. "Come, do not speak in such vague and indefinite terms. Please tell me what you have to say."

Silas Thompson dropped down on a bench, which happened to be under a nearby poplar tree, and sank his face in his hands. "It is terrible, sir, and I cannot summon up courage to tell you."

"Come, come, Uncle Silas," said Sir Reginald eagerly. "You have awakened my apprehensions, especially when you refer to Mary and the boy. Tell me, man, and do not beat about the bush."

"Sir Reginald, you will have to know, and Mary will have to know, and Angus MacKenneth will have to know, and the whole world will have to know," exclaimed Silas in an almost piteous tone.

"Have to know what, Silas? You are really be-

ginning to alarm me, with your repeated references to my wife and son," said Reginald in an alarmed tone.

"Well, then, Sir Reginald, I must tell you the bad news, be it ever so bad. George Wilcox is here, and he has declared that Mary is not your wife.

"Mary not my wife! Come, come, Silas. What derangement or distemper are you suffering from this morning? What mad saying is this?"

"No madness, Sir Reginald, George declares that Veronica Dieulafoi is alive, and is now living in France."

"Mary not my wife, and my son!"—said Sir Reginald in a dazed and bewildered way. That cannot be. It must not be! Upon what evidence does George base this astounding and wild statement?"

"George has seen her, sir, and has conversed with her, he has photographs of her, and, more than that, he has a letter for you from Veronica," replied Mr. Silas Thompson.

Sir Reginald Streetfield, manly, courageous, and self-possessed as he was, gave way completely under the staggering blow, and a great fear took possession of him. He remembered that he had failed to find Veronica's grave, notwithstanding all his efforts and the efforts of those whom he had employed in Paris to assist him.

"What indeed, if she were alive, and George Wilcox was right?" This thought came forcibly home to Sir Reginald.

He made a tremendous effort to control himself, and said to Silas, in a sad and subdued voice. "If this be true, God help and pity Mary."

Then, losing control of himself again, he called

out in agony of spirit. "It cannot be true, Silas, it cannot be true. Should it prove to be so, I am the most wretched and unfortunate of men."

Then, with a supreme effort, he recovered his equipoise, and said to Silas, "I will go in now, and say good-bye to Mary. Perhaps it may be for the last time. We will then go over to your house to meet George. I want to hear him say this thing himself. Do not concern yourself about me. I shall carry this thing through, whatever comes of it. My noble father's death in the prime of his life was my first great sorrow, then followed the loss of Veronica and our child. This caused, as you know, the death of my sainted mother while I was on active service in India. But *this great injustice to Mary and my son!* It cannot be, Silas! It cannot be! It were better, indeed, a thousand times, that I had never been born than that I should have brought this terrible affliction upon them. Come, my weakness has now passed. I will be strong. I will go with you immediately in to see Wilcox. "George Wilcox! What devilishness has indeed seized hold of him?"

Reginald bade Mary good-bye in his usual manner, for he had by this time gained such complete mastery over himself that she did not suspect for a moment from his voice and demeanor that her husband had passed through the most terrible agony of mind and soul that is possible for any man to go through.

Jumping into the vehicle with Mr. Silas Thompson, they sped to Great Hope to meet George Wilcox. He sat silent and pensive. The news had truly overwhelmed him, and had blunted his faculties. He wished to collect his thoughts. He was

as a man lost; a man utterly crushed both in soul and spirit. Silas Thompson respected his silence, and thus did these two wend their way sadly towards their destination, Reginald to hear, perhaps, the doom pronounced upon all his future happiness and peace of mind. It was agonizing to Silas Thompson to even contemplate that, perhaps, Mary McKenneth, the one human being he loved, better than any object on earth, or in heaven, was to have her tender and noble heart crushed, and all her prospects of future happiness utterly destroyed. In short that she was to be cast into an abyss of despair.

To have an intelligent conception of the events just related, and of those still to be related, and to carry on a logical continuity of this narrative, it will be necessary for us to retrace our steps for about fifteen months to the time when George Wilcox last left Tennessee for Paris. Prior to that time, George being home, found it hard to get money, as his father had kept to his determination to place him on a moderate allowance and upon no account to exceed it; but George, learning that his mother had sold some property, through a firm of New York brokers, what did he do but prevail upon Mrs. Wilcox to allow him to go to New York and collect this money for her. His father being away for a few days, George was thereby able to obtain the consent of his mother to do this, which he, indeed, did to the extent of ten thousand dollars. George decamped with this money to Paris, and after arriving there, he had written to his mother, telling her what he had done, and faithfully promising to return the ten thousand dollars in a little while. There was noth-

ing left for the Wilcoxes to do but to accept the situation or bring disgrace upon an honored name. They therefore accepted the *fait accompli*, and George was permitted to proceed along his chosen path without molestation, or even the reproach of his parents, who kept the knowledge of this last escapade of his to themselves, not even letting his sister Grace know about it.

He was not many days in Paris before he fell in with Monsieur Laudet. Monsieur Laudet was in sore straits for money at this time, although he assumed, as he always did, an appearance of affluence and wealth. He soon discovered that George Wilcox had something like forty thousand francs, and he adroitly mapped out a subtle program by which they could enhance that amount to an almost fabulous sum, by using it along those lines with which George had become only too familiar, from his previous associations with Monsieur Laudet.

Monsieur Laudet was an excellent judge of horseflesh, and besides, being well known to a ring of gamesters and sharpers, he was able to place George's money to such good advantage or rather should be said, bad advantage, that he soon recouped his failing fortune and was once more in flourishing circumstances. Laudet and Wilcox grew bolder and bolder, with the rapid mounting of their ill-gotten gains, until they finally decided upon going to Monte Carlo to try their fortunes at the tables there.

These gamesters succeeded beyond their greatest hopes and anticipations, and their winnings at the tables of Monte Carlo soon exceeded half a million francs. After a few weeks, luck seemed to

turn against them, but Laudet was too old a hand to persist in playing. He literally had to coerce his companion to come away with him to Paris. George was at first insistent upon playing further, but he feared to disregard the admonitions of his friend Laudet.

When back in Paris, Mr. George Wilcox found that he was still three hundred thousand francs to the good, when he totalled his winnings at Paris, and at Monte Carlo. He decided while the spirit moved him, he said, upon sending his mother two hundred thousand francs, reparation and restitution for all the money he had taken from his parents from time to time. He sent it to his mother. He knew that she would not fail to receive it. Had he forwarded his letter to his father, he was not certain whether he would accept the letter or not. His father had refused after his last escapade to even correspond with him.

You may be sure that the arrival of so large a sum engendered a hope in the breasts of his parents that perhaps at last George was going to turn over a new leaf, and that this was the beginning of his returning sanity. His father generously placed the whole of that amount in George's name in some very promising investments. Monsieur Laudet's and George's luck seemed to continue and they spent money most prodigally, and continued to occupy the, to them, proud position of leaders of the most fashionable and profligate set in that city of pleasure. Laudet had removed his wife to more pretentious quarters, and once again surrounded her with comforts and luxuries.

The remarkable influence he at will exercised over his wife grew more and more pronounced. He

gradually began to assume to her mind the proportions of a demi-god. He could at will keep her under a semi-hypnotic influence, and reduce her to the condition of an automaton and made to do exactly what she was told. Josephine, however, would recoil from him at intervals, and during these intervals would appear to be more like her old self.

To do Laudet justice, he never failed to respect his wife's delicacy of feeling, and treated her with every consideration. Laudet had never taken home any of his fast companions, and George knew nothing of his being married.

Thus life continued to be one success after another with these two friends in Paris. Dame Fortune never seemed to tire of smiling upon them. But that fickle Dame, however, suddenly ceased to bestow her favors upon them and their fortune began to dwindle appreciably until eventually they were left without any means of support.

They kept up for a few months an appearance of affluence upon their impudence and credit until they sadly realized that even this last recourse was about played out.

Josephine, having some remnant left of her own fortune from her father's estate, was able to maintain her household, although she reduced her expenses to a minimum when she found that Laudet could no longer assist her in keeping up so pretentious an establishment and this he had not done for some months. She dismissed all her superfluous servants, and limited her household expenses to a very moderate sum. As misfortune continued to direct her shafts against these two gamesters, it occurred to Laudet that perhaps it

would be as well if he took Mr. George Wilcox home with him, so that they might be able to maintain, by economy, and perhaps by a return of good luck which had so disastrously deserted them, some sort of appearance.

There were some redeeming qualities in Laudet's nature, as we have already stated. He was genuinely attached to George Wilcox, for Wilcox was a really likeable man; and being associated in so many ventures and adventures had a tendency to cement their friendship. Much to Mr. Wilcox's surprise, Laudet imparted the information to him one morning that he had a wife and had been married for several years, and suggested to him that he should make his home with them for the present. Laudet was fully aware that Wilcox had known the Dieulafois, more especially Veronica, and also that he had been in former years a close friend of Sir Reginald Streetfield. He did not, however, reveal to George his connections with the Dieulafois. He particularly wished to conceal the fact that his wife was a Dieulafoi.

Having arranged with Madame Laudet to receive George as a guest in her home, he cautioned her against revealing her family name, or of evincing any knowledge of the Dieulafois. So Monsieur Laudet took George home with him and he took up his abode with him there. George was glad to do this for he had been living under miserable conditions lately.

It was a day or so after he had been at the Laudets, that George met Josephine. He was tremendously surprised to observe the amazing resemblance between Madame Laudet and Streetfield's deceased wife. The resemblance was so striking that he could not reconcile himself to the

fact that she was some other than Veronica, while Laudet, standing by, appeared to enjoy his perplexity. Madame Laudet's voice, her expression, her eyes, even her figure, were Veronica's. No wonder that George was startled. Josephine had been cautioned not to evince any interest at these expressions of surprise on the part of George. They were allowed to pass unnoticed. George was well brought up and still retaining some of the gallantry and chivalry of a southern gentleman, he refrained from giving utterance to any words of surprise. During those subsequent occasions when George Wilcox was thrown into Josephine's socieey, he had become more and more perplexed and amazed at the extraordinary resemblance Josephine bore to Veronica. On one occasion after he had become better acquainted with Josephine, he told her of her resemblance to the deceased wife of a friend of his, and asked her whether that could be accounted for by any remote relationship with Veronica Dieulafoi. To this question Josephine had been prompted how to answer. She being now well under the control of Laudet's sinister influence, answered in the negative.

It was not long after this that one morning, while these three were together at breakfast and matters with Laudet and George were drifting more and more to the bad, if that were possible, a sudden inspiration occurred to Laudet, and that was nothing less than to commercialize his wife's extraordinary resemblance to her deceased sister, and through that fortunate circumstance to mulct Sir Reginald Streetfield out of an immense sum of money.

Thereupon Laudet, exercising his profound sway

over his wife's mental faculties, minutely instructed her how to act and what to say in carrying out the various deceptive details of his diabolical scheme. Having prepared the net, he had now to draw Mr. Wilcox into it.

One day, as though in a burst of confidence, having previously extracted a promise of eternal secrecy, he confided the startling information to Mr. George Wilcox that Josephine was his wife in name only; in fact, his paramour, and that she was none other than Veronica Dieulafoi, the wife of Streetfield, and that he had enticed her away when she accompanied her mother to France, after the death of Monsieur Dieulafoi in London, Sir Reginald being at that time in India on active service. Monsieur Laudet pointed out to George Wilcox that Sir Reginald Streetfield having married again, and his wife, having borne him a son, it would be a simple matter to mulct Sir Reginald out of large sums of money from time to time, by the skillful carrying out of his plans. George Wilcox's affairs were in a desperate condition, and he could not very well appeal to his parents for money, and besides he bore a grudge against Mary for her prompt and decisive rejection of his offer of marriage. He was now possessed of a diabolical spirit, so that when this opportunity presented itself to avenge himself upon Mary, being unconsciously and completely under the malign influence of Laudet, he readily fell in with the foul plot.

Had not even Emily Lawrence thrown him over, and married Major Brosby George Wilcox placed the blame for this on Sir Reginald. Had he not taken Major Brosby over with him from England, and introduced him to the Wilcoxes?

One of the curious psychical changes that had taken place in George was the perversion of his attachment to and respect for Reginald into a most consuming and implacable hatred.

Laudet proceeded to carry out his diabolical scheme. Under his hypnotic influence, and at his dictation, he caused his wife to write a letter in which Sir Reginald was told that the report of Veronica's death was false, and that she herself was indeed Veronica, and that she, after the birth and death of their child, had experienced an unaccountable revulsion of feeling towards him, and that she desired neither to see him nor even to hear of him again, and that she had been able all these years to make a fair living for herself by her musical talents, but that in the last year or two, however, her health had been failing, and now, learning that he had married again, and that his wife had borne him a son, she did not desire to disturb his present domestic arrangements and happiness, because she would not and could not, under any circumstances, live with him again; but she expected him to support her, and, should he wish to see her he would find her at a certain address, (the address, of course, was a fictitious one, supplied by Laudet) and that, should he do so, he would find her in a delicate state of health, and in need of support, and concluded by saying that she was enclosing a portrait of herself.

The letter was entrusted to George Wilcox, who was to deliver it in person to Sir Reginald Streetfield. George gloated over all this in his own mind, and mentally enacted the scene that would take place when Sir Reginald Streetfield read the contents of that letter. George Wilcox took ex-

quisite delight in picturing to himself Reginald's misery, and besides, was he not to bear witness to the truth revealed in Josephine's letter? The villainous scheme was consummately planned, and both Laudet and George felt sure of its success. George Wilcox was to demand fifty thousand pounds, the minimum price for their silence, and their influence in finally adjusting matters to Reginald's satisfaction. Wilcox left for his home in Tennessee when all the details of the horrible scheme had been carefully and skillfully arranged, and on his arriving there as a part of their plan, he was to simulate contrition and was to ask his parents for their forgiveness, and having been assured of that, he was next to find some suitable person to carry a message to Sir Reginald Streetfield. George thought at once of Silas Thompson. George knew that the deep regard, almost reverence, of Mr. Silas Thompson for Mary, would make him a safe messenger. In a day or so, after George's advent home, an event he had contrived to keep quiet for the time being, he went over to Great Hope to see Silas Thompson. We may be sure that he was greatly surprised at this unexpected visit, but his surprise turned to consternation when the purpose of that visit was revealed.

"Veronica has agreed to accept fifty thousand pounds less my commission, as the smallest sum for her perpetual silence," said Mr. Wilcox, after he had told his tale to Mr. Silas Thompson.

"I do not believe one single syllable of your extraordinary story, Mr. George Wilcox," replied Mr. Thompson quickly, and decisively. "It is a story of your own damnable invention, made up and concocted by you for the purpose of blackmail."

"Just as you like, Mr. Silas Thompson," rejoined George, coldly. "Calling me names will get you nowhere. I am here to deliver this letter to Streetfield, and I have come to you simply to protect Mary to the fullest extent of my power. It is up to you to help me to do that." George knew that he had touched the most tender chord in Silas's heart, and he was convinced that he now had Silas Thompson's co-operation.

He said nothing more, but waited for Silas to break the silence, which he did after being lost in deep thought for a few minutes.

"Mr. Wilcox," he said, in earnest tones, "Mary must be protected at all costs since she is now in this terrible plight, that is, should your story prove true."

"As to its being true, you need have no doubts at all," rejoined George. "In her letter to Sir Reginald Streetfield, Veronica told me she had suggested to Sir Reginald that he go over to France and see her and verify everything himself, and you can go over yourself. You were present at the marriage, and surely you can tell, if the story I have just told you has been made up and concocted."

"If what you say is true, then you are right as to Mary's position, Master George. Great God, I cannot bring myself to believe your story! What you say cannot be true, granting every possible concatenation of unholy circumstances."

Mr. Silas Thompson was in his way, a wise and shrewd man, and well versed in all the wiles of man and the devil, and he came to the conclusion in his own mind, that George Wilcox had something on Sir Reginald, as the phrase goes, and as

the village of Great Hope would have expressed it. But what that something was, Silas Thompson could not for the life of him divine at that time. He discredited unhesitatingly, and entirely scouted the possibility of Veronica's being alive, but he felt nevertheless that there was something tangible behind it all. He knew George's character too well to suppose for a moment that he would come back with such a tale, had there not been some foundation for the story somewhere. He was convinced that Veronica was dead, but even, he argued to himself, were she alive, he knew that young lady so well, that he was justly convinced that she was utterly incapable of acting in the base manner accredited to her by Mr. George Wilcox. He could not, however, explain this story on any rational hypothesis, except that George was really under the delusion that he was telling the truth.

Silas Thompson therefore resolved upon being as wise as a serpent, and as meek as a lamb, in dealing with George and his tale.

He pretended to be highly indignant that George Wilcox should humiliate and debase himself to act in any sort of capacity in this nefarious matter and in this atrocious way, even granting the fact that Veronica was alive.

"I will tell you, Master George Wilcox, that this is the worst thing that you have ever done in your life, even if Veronica were alive. God knows your conduct has been very reprehensible for some years past, and you are bringing the gray hairs of your parents in sorrow to the grave. You have almost broken your sister's heart, and now you want to break the heart of your cousin Mary. What excuse can you possibly offer?"

"Money, Mr. Silas Thompson. Fifty thousand pounds. That is our excuse, money, about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars," answered George, brazenly.

"From whom do you purpose getting this money?" asked Silas Thompson.

"From Sir Reginald Streetfield, of course. Reginald will pay almost any sum to save Mary and his son from disgrace," said George with the utmost assurance.

"If I know Sir Reginald aright, he will do no such thing. He will not give you one cent, nor will he consent to live with Mary for one moment while under a cloud," said Mr. Thompson with great emphasis.

"Maybe he will, maybe he won't, but I have a strong impression that he will. What is fifty thousand pounds to him? I am told that he is extremely wealthy," rejoined George, nonchalantly.

"I would suggest that in the meantime you keep this story to yourself, and see what Sir Reginald has to say to you," severely added Silas.

"That is exactly what I purpose doing, Mr. Silas Thompson. Here are some photographs of Veronica. Please scrutinize them. You will doubtless recognize the supposedly deceased wife of Sir Reginald Streetfield, baronet."

Mr. Silas Thompson took the proffered photographs and scrutinized them very closely, and then said in a sad hopeless voice "These are indeed the photographs of Veronica—I tell you what I will do, Mr. George. I will go over early tomorrow morning and see Sir Reginald and will bring him over here with me to this house, and you can meet him here."

"That suits me exactly, Mr. Thompson. You can tell him just what I need. It will save me a lot of explaining. I shall keep these letters and photographs and will deliver them, in person, into the hands of Sir Reginald Streetfield," replied George.

"Master George, it were better had you been strangled at your birth, than to be mixed up in this damnable plot, and help me God, I will expose it," said Silas, with great stress.

"Keep cool, old man," rejoined George jauntily. "What is the use of getting into a tear? I was not strangulated at my birth, but on the contrary, have arrived at man's estate, and therefore need funds to keep me a going concern in that estate. I will meet you here tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. That will give you ample time to see Reginald and be back. So long, Mr. Thompson. I promised mother not to be away too long." And climbing into his buggy, George drove toward the Wilcox plantation.

We may remark here that George's parents thought it prudent not to tell him of the investment that his father had so generously placed for him out of the money he had sent over to his mother while he was in Paris, hence George was under the impression that he was penniless. The calloused unscrupulousness of George horrified Silas Thompson. He could hardly bring himself to believe that this was the same curly headed boy that used to so often in days gone by sit on his knee and take long rides with him over the country side.

When George left, Mr. Silas Thompson fell into a deep reverie. He felt intensely sorry for Mary

and Sir Reginald. There was not any way he could see at present to circumvent this diabolical plot, for he was convinced that there were more than two in it. It would be utterly useless for him to attempt to influence George with money, even though he had the necessary amount, which he had not. Mr. Silas Thompson would on no account compound a felony, for that was how he regarded this whole villainous transaction of George. Mr. Silas Thompson passed a most distressful night, and when the morning broke he arose from his sleepless couch to go to Sir Reginald, his mind still in a medley of perplexity and uncertainty. He hastened on his way to the residence of Sir Reginald, which was within a radius of six miles from Great Hope, picturesquely situated on the crest of a hill, the sides of which were covered with magnificent magnolia and pine trees.

We have stated that Sir Reginald Streetfield was steeped in deep study as he journeyed towards Silas Thompson's house, where he was to meet Wilcox face to face, and to hear from his lips perhaps the pronouncement of the doom of all his future happiness, and what was infinitely worse, the doom of Mary's future happiness, and a stigma placed upon the name of Streetfield; but Reginald soon aroused himself and he went over all the events of Silas's interview with George Wilcox. Sir Reginald closely questioned him as to the minutest details that had transpired in that tragic interview.

"Should Veronica be alive there is only one course open to me," Sir Reginald determinedly said. "And I am in honor bound to release Mary and my dear son. It will be a terrible injustice

to them. Unfortunate Veronica. If she is alive I cannot imagine what her life must have been all these long years. As to the death of our child, there is no doubt of that. Perhaps Veronica went suddenly insane. I have been informed that some women do go unexpectedly insane under such circumstances, and was possibly placed in an asylum and lost sight of after the death of her mother. I have no knowledge of her having other relatives. Should such have been the case it will account for a great deal, especially as to my failure to find her grave or any trace of her."

Sir Reginald, like all strong men, was able to suppress his emotions although it tore open his heart to do so.

At length they arrived at Silas's house, and alighting, and fastening the horse to a hitching post, Mr. Silas Thompson and Reginald entered the house together. Awaiting them there was Wilcox unconcernedly smoking a cigar. Sir Reginald looked pale and very grave with his jaws firmly set, while Silas Thompson looked troubled and distressed. Silas Thompson having sent Aunt Janet on a mission, as a precautionary measure, lest any word should be overheard by that alert lady, he carefully closed the door. The two gentlemen then faced Mr. George Wilcox, who did not even deign to rise at their entrance. Sir Reginald utterly ignored him, and left it to George Wilcox to begin the conversation. The two men had exchanged no salutation, but this did not in the least way appear to disturb Mr. Wilcox.

"You have heard," Wilcox said, "the unfortunate news that I have brought you, Sir Reginald Streetfield, from Mr. Silas Thompson."

To this Sir Reginald made no reply. He had made up his mind not to exchange a single word with Mr. George Wilcox.

"Well, then your silence is admitted evidence that you have," continued Mr. Wilcox. "You have heard Veronica's terms for her silence in this matter. Here is the letter from your wife, and some photographs of the real Lady Streetfield. She will be glad to hear from you in the matter at your earliest convenience, Sir Reginald Streetfield."

Sir Reginald took the letter and the photographs from George Wilcox, nor did he give him the satisfaction of reading the letter at that time, nor did he even glance at the photographs. He simply put them into his pocket, turned on his heels, and walked out of the room, gently drawing Silas Thompson with him.

In a few minutes Mr. Thompson returned and addressed Mr. George Wilcox, saying, "Sir Reginald Streetfield desires to say that any communications he may wish to make will be made through me. He has retained my services as his legal adviser. Should we have anything to say to you, Master George, I will let you know. Remember, however, that perfect silence has been pledged by you, to me, in this matter."

"Perfect silence as long as it suits my purpose, Mr. Silas Thompson, and not one moment longer. I may suggest that this matter does not brook of much delay. Good-bye." George Wilcox abruptly left the room, and entering his buggy, was soon lost to sight.

Sir Reginald Streetfield opened the letter and read it over several times. His face had taken on an ashen gray color, and he looked twenty years

older. He then scrutinized the photographs and decisively said, "There can be no question about it, Uncle Silas. This letter is in her handwriting, and these photographs are hers, but of one thing I am absolutely certain, and that is, that Veronica never wrote that letter of her own volition. I know Veronica too well. She is utterly incapable of such sentiments as contained in this letter."

"The photographs are very true ones, as I remember her," said Mr. Thompson, closely scrutinizing the pictures again. He then carefully read the letter which Reginald had handed to him.

"The letter looks genuine, I must confess, Sir Reginald, but as to the sentiment of it, I agree with you entirely. It is altogether foreign to anything that Veronica would have written of her own will, and notwithstanding these apparently indubitable proofs, I am convinced that you are the victim of a plot. We shall have to pick our way very cautiously. We have a set of utterly unscrupulous and hardened scoundrels to deal with. This is what I suggest. We must leave for France at once, Sir Reginald. We will have to take Angus MacKenneth into our confidence. Mary can wait. We must save her all we can. Should the matter turn out to be a plot, it would be only inflicting useles torture upon her to tell her anything just now. We shall have to go to Paris immediately. The plot is a dangerous one, and will need more heads than yours and mine. We must ask Major Brosby, and Dr. Vernon to go with us. They can bring their servants along with them. Those three men know Paris better than any of us, and may be invaluable to us. When we get to Paris, we shall call upon your supposed wife. You note

I say supposed, Sir Reginald, for I do not believe, in spite of all this documentary evidence produced by Wilcox, that this woman who wrote you that letter is your wife. It is a damnable plot, Sir Reginald, it is a damnable plot, sir. But to go on. Angus MacKenneth must stay here to look after Mary and the boy. Mary as I said, will have to be kept in darkness for a while. You must invent some excuse to get away without exciting her suspicions. The same applies to Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon and myself. Dr. Vernon knows the haunts of George Wilcox and of his disreputable companion, Monsieur Laudet. I am convinced that this man Laudet has had a great deal to do with the whole damnable transaction."

"But how came they in possession of Veronica's photographs and how do you account for her handwriting?" said Reginald.

"It is a strange, prodigious, and remarkable cancatination of circumstances that will all explain themselves, when once we arrive at a solution of the riddle, Sir Reginald, and Monsieur Alphonso Laudet holds the key to that solution, and Master George, you will find, has only been a tool in the hands of a master. But we must act with energy and dispatch. We must sail by the very first boat we can get. That we must do. I will see Master George and tell him that you have decided to see Veronica and that you are going to France right away, as we say in America, and that nothing can be decided until you have seen and spoken with Veronica. You had better let matters remain in my hands in respect to Angus MacKenneth. I can do better with him than you can. He is an impulsive man, and has a most fiery

disposition, but I know how to deal with him."

"I will do as you say, Uncle Silas. I have retained you to assist me, and am entirely in your hands. To tell you the truth, I have an almost overmastering desire to take this man Wilcox by the throat and shake him like a dog until he gives us the truth of this matter."

"That will not get you anywhere, or anything, Sir Reginald. The other man will be left. Our purpose must be to keep this matter absolutely quiet until we arrive at a solution of the whole mystery. In the first place, I shall have to prevent Angus MacKenneth from turning upon you. I must see him and get him to realize the injustice of such a procedure. He will then turn against George Wilcox and will want to rend him in twain. This must be prevented. Mr. Angus MacKenneth will keep good watch over Mary and the boy, and I know that George has a wholesome fear of him, so he will leave Mary alone, and will not molest her in any way." A council of war was called next day at Silas Thompson's and Dr. Vernon was telegraphed for, and Angus MacKenneth and Major Brosby were notified to be present. Major Brosby was thunderstruck when he heard the news and as for Dr. Vernon; he was so incredulous as to be inclined to treat the matter as a practical joke. Dr. Vernon, however, had finally to admit the seriousness of the situation, and he offered to worm the real facts of the case out of George Wilcox, over whom he still had some little influence. Mr. Silas Thompson predicted that it would be a waste of effort but consented to Dr. Vernon making the attempt. This Dr. Vernon proceeded forthwith to do, but had to report a total failure, as Mr. Thompson had anticipated.

George Wilcox was very bland and innocent with Dr. Vernon. He protested that he was simply commissioned by Veronica to carry the letter to Sir Reginald. All these statements, he said could easily be verified or confuted in Paris. Beyond this Dr. Vernon could get nothing out of George Wilcox.

Mary was informed that Reginald had been suddenly called back to Europe with Major Brosby, and that they had to sail immediately that he would probably have to stay away for a month or more, and that the nature of his business during that period was such that she might not possibly hear from him for some time, but she should not on that account alarm herself. In the meantime she was told that her father would stay with her, and keep her company. Mary was of course surprised at Sir Reginald's sudden departure, but she reasoned with herself that Reggie's estates in England must sometimes need earnest and close attention, and as for Major Brosby, he was liable to prompt and sudden orders; but what really perplexed her was that Uncle Silas Thompson should have to go too.

This was explained to Mary in this way. Sir Reginald Streetfield, she was told, had such a high regard for the legal acumen and the wide experience of Uncle Silas, that he had decided to take him with him to Europe to help straighten out some unlooked for entanglements they had not anticipated. This seemed to satisfy as well as gratify Mary, as an implied compliment to her Uncle Silas. In regard to Angus MacKenneth, it was just as Silas Thompson had predicted. Angus flew into a terrible rage. This man Reginald Street-

field had caused this awful disgrace, he thundered, to fall upon his daughter, but with quiet reasoning, Mr. Thompson was enabled to get Angus to see matters in their true light. He clearly pointed out to Angus MacKenneth that there was not the faintest trace of deception or of dishonorable conduct that could be attributed to Sir Reginald Streetfield. Angus then, as Silas Thompson anticipated, turned upon George Wilcox and he swore he would tear him limb from limb. But Mr. Silas Thompson knew well the ways of Angus. He allowed MacKenneth's wrath to exhaust itself from sheer vehemence, and when he had done this by his terrible invectives and denunciations, Silas proceeded to point out to him the injustice of his remarks about Sir Reginald, and the stupidity of his threats against Wilcox. Mr. Angus MacKenneth was essentially a just man, and anything savoring of injustice rankled in his bosom. It was the cruel injustice to his daughter which caused him to break out in such paroxysms of wrath. Silas Thompson pointed out to him that he was doing Sir Reginald a great injustice; that at the most Sir Reginald was the innocent victim of unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances.

"It is all a plot, simply and entirely, Angus, you have got to do your part to circumvent it. To act irrationally never has gained anybody anything. Our efforts must be directed to prevent any knowledge of this reaching the ears of Mary. There your work will be invaluable, Angus," said Mr. Thompson to Mr. McKenneth. And he continued, "George Wilcox must not be molested. We can depend upon his not divulging anything at present."

The matter was arranged as satisfactorily as possible under these very distressing circumstances. The party consisting of Sir Reginald Streetfield, Mr. Silas Thompson, Dr. Vernon, Major Brosby, and our three musketeers, Will Burke, Phil Knox and Harry Brooks, left almost immediately for New York en route to France.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PURPLE COVERING OF DEATH

The passage across the Atlantic was an uneventful one. There were not even those not unusual incidents of bad weather and stormy seas, or a man overboard, to take the thoughts of our party away from the delicate and unpleasant mission upon which they were bent and upon which so much depended.

Arriving at Paris, the party elected to stop at the Hotel St. Petersburg, Rue de Carmartin, as being centrally situated. The only one of the party that exhibited any manifestation of pleasure was Mr. Silas Thompson. He rubbed his hands gleefully, and would repeatedly reiterate to himself, "Think of me, Silas Thompson, being in Paris. Life is certainly a conundrum, and a kaleidescope. I shall be a globe-trotter before I get through my life. How remarkable! How strange! How prodigious!" He did not rest until he received the assurance of both Major Brosby and Dr. Vernon that they would between them find time and leisure to pilot him around the interesting places with which that city abounds.

We may as well mention here that both Major Brosby and Dr. Vernon were true to their promises and that Mr. Thompson was given the opportunity of seeing the Chemin de Fer de Ceinture, the Bastile, the Boulevard du Palais and the Boulevard St. Michel, Rue de la Paix, the Place de l'Etoile, the Luxemburg Garden, the Jarbin des Plantes, the Buttes-Chaumont Park, the Champ de Mars, the Eiffel Tower, the Bois de

Boulonge, and the Bois de Vincennes, the Arc de Triomphe, the Place du Carrousel, the Place de la Concorde, Place Louvois, the Louvre, the Tuileries, the Elysee Palace, the Luxembourg Palace, the Palais Bourbon, the palace of the Legion of Honor, the St. Germain-des-Pres, and other places of interest, the exploring of which Silas Thompson thoroughly appreciated.

It was interesting to observe how well he remembered the salient points in the history of most of them. It was quite evident that he had recently made a study of many of them. That was Silas Thompson's way. Anything that he undertook, he consistently strove to do thoroughly and well. In his sight-seeing he was no less attentive to details than in any matter he undertook in his own profession. He aimed, he said, to get the full measure of his visit to Paris as when he visited England.

The address that was given to Sir Reginald Streetfield as purporting to be that of Veronica was in a nearby town called Antenil. Sir Reginald had written to the supposed Veronica at the address given. The letter as a matter of course was intercepted by Laudet. Sir Reginald received a reply the next day giving an address in another suburban town, naming the day and the time for the momentous interview. On the day and at the time appointed Sir Reginald Streetfield, Mr. Silas Thompson, and Major Brosby punctually presented themselves at the gate of a fairly prosperous looking villa.

The giving of a different address struck Sir Reginald and the rest of the party as unusual and tended to strengthen their suspicions.

Silas Thompson was added to the party because Veronica was particularly gracious to him when

she met him in England, and his unusual mode of dress would not be likely to escape her memory.

When these three gentlemen arrived at the address given, they were ushered into a large drawing room. There sedately sat Josephine apparently awaiting their arrival. The visitors, on seeing her were completely deceived by her remarkable resemblance to Veronica.

"Veronica!" exclaimed Sir Reginald, greatly agitated and motionless from amazement.

"Veronica you may well say, Sir Reginald Streetfield," said the supposed Veronica. "Yes, Veronica Dieulafoi, your wife. Please be seated, gentlemen. You wish to see me, I am told."

All this was spoken in English, with the most cultured accent. Her looks, her eyes, her voice, her gestures, her form, were those of Veronica. The effect upon Sir Reginald was startling and painful in the extreme. He had been deeply and fervently attached to Veronica; and although he had married again, he never ceased to mourn her and cherish her, and here she was before him, alive, and apparently as well as ever.

"We have called," said Major Brosby, assuming to be spokesman of the party, as Sir Reginald was too overcome to speak, "at your request, Lady Streetfield."

"It is true, Sir Reginald Streetfield," replied Josephine, ignoring Major Brosby, and addressing her remarks to Sir Reginald. "You have called at my request. I want to convince you, sir, that I am Veronica Dieulafoi, your long-forgotten wife. I do not wish ever to see you again, after shamefully abandoning me all these years. All I demand is that you suitably provide for my

support, say fifty thousand pounds and I shall never trouble you again. This is a modest sum, I think, considering your enormous wealth."

"You surely know me, Lady Streetfield? Do you not remember me at Streetfield Manor? You surely remember me as having been present at your wedding?" interposed Mr. Silas Thompson, seeing that Reginald was still overcome and remained silent.

"I know you, sir? I do not. I do not recall ever having seen you. I know my husband there, Sir Reginald Streetfield. Why does he not speak? What has he to say to me for so cruelly deserting me?"

"I did not desert you, Veronica," earnestly spoke up Sir Reginald, at length, recovering his equanimity and voice. "Surely you remember my regiment being ordered out to India on active service? You greatly wrong me when you accuse me of abandoning you."

"Had you not deserted me, sir, how comes it that I am in France at this present time, and you in America with a wife and child?"

"It is unfortunately true that I have married again, Veronica. I have with me letters I received when on active service in India, telling me of your death. Here is one from the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, who married us. Read it before you judge me," said Reginald, taking the letters out of his pocket.

"You have letters, you say, telling you of my death? Please return them to your pocket, sir. I do not want to see them. A nice tale indeed to tell me after all these years," replied Josephine sarcastically.

"Cannot you believe me, Veronica? What can I do to convince you? You are cruelly mistaken," replied Sir Reginald appealingly.

"You ask me what you can do?" replied the supposed Veronica in a most emphatic manner. "I will tell you, Sir Reginald Streetfield. You can make over to me the fifty thousand pounds I demand for my support, and you may go your own way, and I will mine. We need never meet again."

"Do you not know me, Lady Streetfield? Cannot you remember seeing me at Streetfield Manor, at your wedding, and again at the funeral of your father-in-law, Sir William Streetfield, and did we not meet at the Oglesbys' where you were staying prior to your marriage?" interposed Silas Thompson again, seeing that Sir Reginald appeared overcome with the shame and the horror of the whole trend of the conversation with one he had almost worshipped as the embodiment of all that was divine in woman.

"Do I know you, Monsieur?" asked Josephine tersely. "I do not, sir. I have never before seen you, not having lived in the ark."

Major Brosby, who had been standing by, an intensely interested spectator and listener in this remarkable scene and dialogue between the supposed Veronica and Sir Reginald, could not suppress a smile at this sharp sally on the part of Josephine, notwithstanding the extreme gravity of the situation.

"If money is all you want," at length replied Sir Reginald Streetfield, almost bitterly, "you may be assured I will give you all you need, madame, but I will never admit deserting you. You must be ill or out of your mind madame, to make such a

ridiculous and so horrible an accusation against me."

"Out of a husband, not out of my mind, Sir Reginald Streetfield. That is truly what I am out of. Out of a husband and out of money. You may just as well admit deserting me, Monsieur le Soldat. I insist, however, that you make some reparation," said Josephine with great emphasis.

"You shall have what you ask for, Madame, said Sir Reginald, severely. "I will have the necessary papers drawn up and you shall have your fifty thousand pounds."

"Now that you have agreed to make reparation, Sir Reginald Streetfield, please leave me, all three of you. I expect an early fulfillment of your agreement, sir, and I never want to see you again. I will leave your punishment to your own conscience. Good-day, gentlemen." With this Josephine arose from her seat, and left the room. Even her carriage and her grace of movement were Veronica's.

Streetfield gently drew his companions, Major Brosby and Mr. Silas Thompson out of the room, and made a quick exit into the street.

To understand and appreciate the scene that had just taken place between Sir Reginald and his supposedly abandoned wife, calls for an explanation. On the bald narrative of the scene and dialogue it would appear as though partaking of the nature of an opera bouffe. But beneath the superficialities of what was said in that interview, lay a most dangerous and consummately woven and villainous plot.

To begin with, there was not the slightest design or desire of fraud or deception on the part of Josephine. What she said she said sincerely and

believingly. She was enacting a part without her own consciousness. That was all. To all intents and purposes she was Veronica and not Josephine and was speaking for Veronica, and what she said was truthfully and sincerely spoken as far as she herself was concerned.

Monsieur Laudet had repeatedly placed Josephine under his hypnotic influence, and when in that state, he would impress upon her that she was not Josephine at all, but her sister Veronica, and that she was most shamefully abandoned by her husband, who was very wealthy, having succeeded to his father's estates and he had married again and that his wife had presented him with an heir, and that she herself was in dire poverty, and that she was to demand from him a large sum of money, not less than fifty thousand pounds, for her future comfort.

These *seances* were enacted over and over again, so that when Josephine was placed by him, in one of these trances, she would impersonate Veronica so naturally and effectively as to carry conviction to the most doubting.

Having this explanation in mind, the meeting between Sir Reginald and his supposed wife does not appear so inconsistent with reason as one would at first be apt to conclude.

The three friends were utterly dumfounded when they reached the street. Sir Reginald indeed appeared crushed. To be branded as a wife deserter, and a bigamist! And over and above all this was the thought of Mary's terrible plight, and that of his infant son. He was as silent as the grave and as white as a sheet. The three friends drove a long way in deep silence. Finally

Silas Thompson said in a serious tone, "She is certainly Veronica. We cannot gainsay that, yet she strangely does not recall me, or you either, Major Brosby. Most of her conversation and remarks were addressed to Sir Reginald. There is a distinct hiatus here. I confess I am nonplussed."

"It is as I surmised, Silas. It is a clear case of insanity, so often originating in just such a condition as Veronica passed through. That would account for the lapse and loss of memory and her utter distortion of facts. Did I not consider Veronica insane, I should feel infinitely wounded and humiliated, in fact, I consider her to be utterly insane. She is no more like the old Veronica, in disposition and character than darkness is to light. There has taken place in her mind a complete perversion of her whole nature."

"Cheer up, cheer up, old man," said Major Brosby heartily, slapping Reginald on the back. "It is hard luck, old man. It is the hardest I ever saw a man up against. Remember, old chap, it is always darkest before dawn. We have all to take our medicine in this life, sweet or bitter."

"Thanks, good old Brosby. I am making the effort of my life. I will take my medicine, never fear, but good God, man! Just think of Mary! This is going to kill her."

"Sir Reginald, I want to say this. Appearances are decidedly against us. Nevertheless, I have an abiding faith that will not down, notwithstanding your arguments to the contrary that we are in a villainous, dangerous, and subtle plot, and that money is at the bottom of it," said Silas Thompson earnestly.

"Tut, tut, Uncle Silas. What is the use of de-

ceiving ourselves? You saw Veronica. So did the Major. We all saw Veronica. We cannot doubt that. I believe she is insane. You may be right, but I am convinced that I am right. The fact of the matter is, we may both be right. I believe we have there the germ of the whole solution. Veronica is insane, and somebody has been taking advantage of her peculiar form of insanity to blackmail me, and I am appalled when I realize that I have married Mary MacKenneth, my first wife being alive. We cannot doubt our own senses, Silas, unless we, too, are insane, and are laboring under a delusion."

"It is well sometimes even to doubt one's own senses, Sir Reginald. There you are, Sir Reginald, the party of the first part, and Veronica, your wife, the late Lady Streetfield, the party of the second part. You noticed, I said the late Lady Streetfield. I do not want to be misquoted later. Well, you, the party of the first part, are a soldier, and you are ordered to war, and while you are away, the party of the second part, that is Veronica, dies, then comes back after an absence of five years, the party of the first part, and he can not even find traces of the party of the second part. That is, Veronica. He marries again, and has a son. Now comes to life the party of the second part, and demands an immense sum of money, and moreover using as a go-between, the services of a consummate rascal. It is quite clear that money is the cause of the resurrection of the party of the second part, and where money is the object, and money alone, we must beware of fraud."

"Come, come, Uncle Silas. I know you mean

well, and your legal reasonings and theories are all proper and necessary. A catastrophe confronts us, not a theory or a deduction in law."

"Sir Reginald, you have asked me to assist you, and so, God helping me, I am going to see you safely through, come what may."

"Good old Uncle Silas! You have always been a true friend to me. Unfortunate Veronica! She has not changed much in appearance, but she is insane, Silas. She is insane. What a really beautiful woman she is! And to think of our Mary, Uncle Silas. Good God! What a predicament for a man to be in. It were better that he were dead."

"Reggie," for Silas called him thus when wishing to be very earnest and emphatic, "it is not right for you to talk in that strain. You have done nothing wrong. Nothing to be ashamed of. Just one of those *contretemps*, as the French say, that will occur sometimes, in the lives of the best and truest of men. You know the old adage, 'a virtuous man never fears what may happen.' Be strong in the conviction of the absolute rectitude of your conduct. Mary will do just as you are now doing, should matters not clear up, and I know what that will be. She will grieve and sorrow more for you than for herself. You will need all your fortitude in this terrible predicament. I cannot help but feel that it will all blow over."

"Do not hold out any elusive and absurd hopes, Uncle Silas. I may as well face the terrible situation and not console and deceive myself by believing that things may be what they really are not."

The party agreed not to say anything more about the subject until evening, and arranged a

meeting to be held in Major Brosby's room for that night. In the meanwhile the subject was taboo.

Major Brosby, by his constant flow of good humor, witticisms and *bon mots* endeavored to keep the party in good spirits and succeeded so well under the circumstances, that if it were not for his cheerfulness Sir Reginald Streetfield would have been utterly distracted, for the seeming hopelessness of the situation appalled him.

One precautionary measure that Sir Reginald had taken to save Mary from any apprehension, was to prepare her for silence on his part for some little time to come. He told her it would be very inconvenient for him to write for a few weeks, and that she would have to content herself with hearing from her Uncle Silas, who would be in a better position to write. The matter he had in hand, he said, was of such supreme importance as to compel him to virtually neglect everything and everybody until he was through with it, and that on his return he would tell her all the details, and she would then fully understand why he did not write.

After dinner a council of war was held in the Major's room. Sir Reginald, it was decided, was to write and suggest a delay of the settlement until he had communicated with his lawyers. In the meanwhile, at the suggestion of Major Brosby, a search was to be made for Monsieur Laudet. Major Brosby for the first time, to the great surprise of all present, related the adventure of George Wilcox and himself in the Chateaux d' Eaulant, and spoke in high terms of the courage and ingenuity of Phil Knox, Harry Brooks and par-

ticularly of Will Burke. He told them of the villainous treachery of Laudet. To this narrative Silas Thompson, Dr. Vernon, and Reginald listened with breathless interest.

"Why did you not say something about this before, Brosby," demanded Sir Reginald. "It has thrown a flood of light upon the situation."

"Well, Streetfield," returned Major Brosby, "we had a tacit agreement not to say anything about it, but under the present circumstances I feel that I can with propriety tell the story."

Dr. Vernon then recounted his experiences with George Wilcox and Laudet, and this narrative proved interesting as well, and tended to show that there had been already a friendship established between George Wilcox and Laudet. And taking into consideration the fact that George, for some time past had not been receiving any funds from his father, and further, he had undertaken the nefarious part assigned to him, hence it was clear to all that Silas Thompson was right in referring the whole transaction to a money making plot.

The first step, they agreed, would be to go to the proper authorities and lay their case before them, and bring about the arrest of Monsieur Laudet. And having procured a warrant for his arrest, they should endeavor to find him and through him, to learn the true story of Veronica's sudden resurrection.

Major Brosby and Silas Thompson derived some encouragement from the fact that Veronica had utterly failed to recognize either of them, and for the first time a suspicion began to dawn upon them that perhaps after all it was a case of Ver-

onica having a double. But this Sir Reginald would not admit. He was certain that he could not possibly be mistaken in his recognition of his wife, and attributed her failure to recognize Major Brosby and Silas Thompson to a phase of her insanity. He was more positive than ever that Veronica was insane, and had been so since the birth of her child, and advantage of that circumstance had been taken by some unscrupulous scoundrels who were trying to make capital out of her misfortune. But he fully agreed with his friends that Laudet was the master-mind behind the whole scheme. Even, he argued with his companions, should it be proved that the blackmailing scheme had been hatched and carried out by George Wilcox, Monsieur Laudet and Veronica, that in itself would not help his position in any way in regard to his relationship to Mary and the birth of his child. Financially he would be rescued, he said, from the payment of a large sum of money, but that did not concern him in the least. The payment of fifty thousand pounds would not embarrass him, but to him the whole problem still seemed insoluble.

The next matter they agreed upon was to trace Veronica to her own home. The addresses that were given were only temporary expedients devised by Laudet in carrying out his scheme.

It was also agreed that Will Burke, Harry Brooks, and Phil Knox should engage in a search for Laudet, and so also would Dr. Vernon, who knew well his favorite haunts. It was further decided that they should secure the services of the cleverest detectives in Paris.

Having carefully arranged their plan of cam-

paign, the party broke up for the night. Early next day these plans were put into execution. Captain Brosby and Sir Reginald appealed to the American and British legations, and through them to the proper authorities to bring about the arrest of Laudet on a charge of attempt to blackmail, and detectives were employed to trace Monsieur Laudet and Veronica. The first of these matters proved to be the most difficult. The charges against Laudet were too vague and too supposititious. The authorities demanded something specific and less vague. At this juncture Will Burke came to the rescue. In passing through one of the places, in which he was aware, from his former experiences, Laudet might be found, he came across Monsieur Henry Rochecauld. The self-same Henry Rochecauld that they had bound and gagged at the Chateaux d'Eaulant. He was sitting at a table with two others, and partaking of a bottle of wine. Will Burke took a seat near by, and ordered a bottle for himself.

In a few minutes, not longer than was necessary for his quick brain to form a plan of action, he went over to the table, where sat the three gentlemen, and in the most polite manner asked whether any of those present could tell him where he could find Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, a barrister he had known, he said, years ago, for he had some legal matters he needed to attend to, and he knew no other he liked as well as Monsieur Rochecauld. He would like very much to know where he could find this lawyer. Moreover, he said that he had not seen him for many years, and he was sure he would not be able to recognize him did he meet him, nor did he think that Monsieur Rochecauld would know him again.

The directness of his appeal seemed to satisfy Monsieur Rochecauld that Will Burke was acting in good faith. He arose and greeted him and introduced himself as Monsieur Henry Rochecauld, avocat. He introduced Burke to his companions. Will Burke apologized for disturbing their conversation and begged of them to share a bottle of the best wine that the place afforded.

The invitation being graciously accepted, Mr. Burke informed the party that he had returned from India, had since been over to the United States, and that he had some important financial matters to arrange, and perhaps Monsieur Rochecauld could assist him in this, and so would he please give him a few moments of his time, and if the good gentleman would be so kind as to drink another bottle of wine of such excellent vintage, he would ask Monsieur Rochecauld with their kind permission to another table, where he could in a few minutes state his business. All of which were readily agreed to. Will Burke lost no time in telling Monsieur Rochecauld that he wanted to meet Laudet. He said he was well known to him in days gone by, and had had many a game of cards with him, and that he considered Monsieur Laudet possessed such a bright and jovial nature, it was indeed a pleasure to play a game with him, and that, in regard to his business, it was in connection with some mining properties in the United States, in which he had become heavily interested, but in regard to this he would later inform him; but he would like, in the meantime, to while away a few hours at play that night. He had a few thousand francs, he said, he could well afford to lose.

All this Will Burke said in so plausible a manner, that Monsieur Henry Rochecauld promised to meet him at a certain gaming house where he was sure, he said, they would find Laudet. Having arranged this satisfactorily to himself, and bidding his recent acquaintances good-bye, Burke hastened to the hotel to inform Sir Reginald of his success.

It must be understood that a great change had taken place in Bill Burke from those days when he was a humble porter at the hotel. Since then he had had nearly six years of military discipline, his experiences in the Afridis War, and his necessarily close association with such bright minds as those of the scientists attached to the mission to Tibet had enabled him to inform himself on a great many matters, and being a man of much natural intelligence and alertness of mind, he had stored up a surprisingly large amount of most valuable information; and besides, since he had been decorated with the Victoria Cross, he had become ambitious to acquire all the knowledge he possibly could, to prove himself worthy of so great an honor. He had therefore assiduously applied himself to study, and he had read many of the works of the more famous authors; and on the whole, could pass for a fairly well educated man. His personal appearance had also undergone a wonderful transformation. He carried himself like a gentleman, and he certainly acted and dressed like one. The changes in Phil Knox and Harry Brooks were striking too, but to a less degree.

Sir Reginald tendered to Will Burke all the funds he needed to carry out his plans in tracing Monsieur Laudet. The detectives had reported that they were unable to locate him. He was

doubtless, they said, keeping well under cover, while putting through his schemes. That evening Bill Burke met Henry Rochecauld at the appointed hour and place. To his great surprise, who should he find there in company with Laudet, but Colonel Vernaid, one of the three French officers of the Chateau d'Eaulant adventure. Monsieur Rochecauld introduced Mr. William Burke, from India and the United States, to Laudet, and Colonel Vernaid of the African chasseurs.

It was very improbable that either Laudet or Colonel Vernaid would have recognized, in this smart and up-to-date gentleman, the hotel porter of the Chateau d'Eaulant escapade. Will Burke felt quite secure on his part. They played a long game, and stakes were fairly heavy. Will Burke, being plentifully supplied with money by Sir Reginald, lost heavily during the night, some five thousand francs. This was all done according to the agreements with Sir Reginald.

The game over, William Burke fraternized with Colonel Vernaid, and, as we remarked in the earlier chapter, he spoke French fluently, he was able to so ingratiate himself with the colonel of the African Chasseurs, that he was invited by that gallant officer to lunch next day at his hotel, which invitation Burke readily accepted. The next day at the appointed hour, Bill Burke and Major Brosby prepared to meet the Colonel at lunch.

The Colonel instantly recognized Major Brosby, and was apparently delighted to meet him again.

Burke, having excused himself on some pretext asked Colonel Vernaid to kindly accept Major Brosby as a substitute for himself at lunch, to which the Colonel graciously assented, and he left the two men to themselves. Colonel Vernaid had

been away for years in Africa, and had met Laudet shortly after his recent return to Paris at one of the fashionable gaming houses, and Laudet had explained away his part in that Chateau d' Eaulant affair, as being a most meritorious one; and so plausible was his story, that he had accepted it and fully believed it.

Major Brosby and the Colonel exchanged many stories, Brosby of adventures in India, and Colonel Vernaid of adventures in Africa. Major Brosby spoke French well, and the Colonel was by no means an indifferent English scholar. He spoke English correctly, as, he explained to the major, his mother was an English lady, and he had passed all his early life in his mother's country. Major Brosby was not long in divining that his fellow military companion was a man of broad and generous sympathies, and with a high sense of honor and justice, so he decided to take the Colonel into his confidence, and he related to him all the incidents that had taken place in the life of their fellow military officer, Captain Streetfield.

Colonel Vernaid was so much impressed with the story that he volunteered his aid in clearing up the mystery. "Monsieur Laudet, I am now convinced," he said, "is a most consummate scoundrel, and he will doubtless cover up his tracks; and Major Brosby," he added, "it will take us all our time, energy and acumen to trap him."

Colonel Vernaid suggested that they act in concert with the department of justice, for he was of the opinion that there must be some charge hanging over Laudet that would give them a plausible excuse to have him arrested. "It is not to be supposed," he opined, "that a man who had for so long led the life that Laudet had, could have

avoided committing some act which would bring him within the range of the police," and suggested that they work with the police prefect and have him look up the records at the police archives, and report next day to him, and he volunteered to undertake that part of the investigation.

It was three days before the Colonel was seen again. He called upon the major, and was introduced to Sir Reginald, and the rest of the party, and glad he was to inform them that he, after infinite pains, had unearthed something they could hold against Monsieur Laudet.

The Colonel, being a French officer of high military rank and position, was able to bring a good deal of pressure to bear upon the department of justice, and he was able to report that they at length discovered that a certain Monsieur Dubois while in Vienna, a few years ago, mulcted a scion of the house of Hapsburg out of an immense sum of money, and had decamped, probably to England, and no trace was ever found of him, although they had a fairly accurate description of the swindler. On further investigation, and by the interchange of many and lengthy telegrams the department of justice in Paris was able to obtain a good description of Monsieur Dubois, and this description tallied, in every particular, with that of Monsieur Laudet. Upon this information, Sir Reginald was able to lay his complaint before the department of justice, and succeeded in having a warrant issued for the arrest of Monsieur Dubois, who was no other than Laudet, and having acquired that, they were now able to work with the gendarmes provided by that department.

The matter was simmering down to a definite point. Once Laudet arrested, and Josephine traced,

which latter had as yet not been done, as the addresses given hitherto were temporary ones, used by the astute Laudet for the occasion, a solution of the mystery was near.

The police inspector promised to have the gendarmes ready to hand, and suggested that when the arrest was made, that Sir Reginald and his party should be at hand to interrogate Laudet, especially as he was likely to stubbornly resist arrest, and would perhaps be fatally wounded in the attempt.

The arrangement was that Colonel Vernaid have an appointment with Laudet at a certain fashionable but notorious gaming house; and the gendarmes gain admission into the place through him. Sir Reginald Streetfield and Mr. Silas Thompson who would not be denied, Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon, and our three musketeers, Will Burke, Harry Brooks and Phil Knox, were to accompany the gendarmes. The whole plan of arrest was set for the next evening, Colonel Vernaid having in the meantime made the appointment with Monsieur Laudet.

This fashionable gaming house was situated in one of the most select and secluded streets of Paris. There was nothing to indicate, from the external appearance of the building that it harbored many of the most notorious gamesters in that city, it was just a pretentious looking mansion, like many others in the same street. Colonel Vernaid had agreed upon a plan of procedure with the gendarmes. He was to excuse himself at the hour of midnight on the plea of having some important duty early next morning. He was then to leave the club, and linger for a moment at the door to light a cigar. This was to be the sig-

nal for the gendarmes to rush in, gag and overpower the door keeper. They were then to be guided by the colonel to the room where Laudet was to be found.

When Colonel Vernaid arrived at this mansion, he gave the agreed signal, three long rings, followed by a short one. The door was very cautiously opened by a veritable giant in livery, who asked his name, and received the password for the evening, every matter being conducted in the most cautious manner. The door keeper being satisfied as to the eligibility of the Colonel, allowed him to pass into the hall. The Colonel guided by the modern Hercules, passed by two doors, and halted at the third on their right. Here his guide gave three gentle raps, followed by a loud one. This door was opened by another powerfully built man, as formidable looking as the first, also in livery. This door led into a long corridor, heavily carpeted, the walls of which were hung with pictures in heavy gold frames. Chandeliers, suspended from the roof along the whole length of the hall, brilliantly lighted up the corridor and accorded one an opportunity to inspect the beautiful paintings on the walls as one passed down. To the walls themselves, which were covered with heavy embossed paper of the most exquisite pattern, were attached brass brackets holding lights of various colors, giving the corridor a most entrancing, though perhaps, a slightly weird appearance.

The second man in livery beckoned the Colonel to follow him, and after he had traversed half the length of the corridor, he stood before a picture of the Great Napoleon. To the side of this picture, but hidden by its massive frame, the attendant found a button. This he pressed. The picture of

Napoleon slowly turned outward. It was in fact a false or dummy door. This led into another hall, about ten feet wide and twenty long. This hall was an epitome of the lengthy corridor through which the Colonel had recently passed. It was likewise heavily carpeted, and its walls hung with pictures, and lighted in the same manner; but in addition, it contained several heavy chairs upholstered in purple plush, set here and there. Leading from the center of this hall, were folding doors. On opening these doors, which responded to the slightest touch, a great flood of light burst upon the Colonel.

He saw before him a large square room, furnished in heavy purple plush, and brilliantly lighted by immense chandeliers, and here and there were set small marble tables surrounded with chairs, most of them being occupied. At one of these tables sat Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, looking as debonair and immaculate as ever. As Colonel Vernaid entered, he caught sight of Laudet and made his way between the scattered tables towards him. At Laudet's table there were four others besides himself, evidently anticipating the advent of the Colonel, to make the sixth.

Laudet, taking out his watch, and looking at it, said, as Colonel Vernaid approached, "Punctual to the minute, Colonel."

"This is a part of a soldier's discipline," replied the Colonel. "I am sorry however, I shall not be able to play after twelve o'clock, Monsieur Laudet. I have some important matters to attend to; but that will give us a good two hours and a half for our game. It is just nine-thirty."

"This is a disappointment, Colonel. We anticipated an all-night session, but I am aware that

the exigencies of military service are such that a soldier's time can never be counted upon. Let us make good use of the time we have, however."

The introductions over, Colonel Vernaid seated himself at the table, and in a few minutes they were all deeply engrossed in their game. It had been agreed that Colonel Vernaid was to lose heavily, Sir Reginald Streetfield having supplied all necessary funds, so there would be less demur when he relinquished the game.

"My play is wretched," exclaimed the Colonel. "Luck is against me." And he began to lose heavily. By midnight he had lost twenty thousand francs.

As the Colonel arose to go, Laudet said, in his inimitably seductive way, "Too bad you have to leave the loser, Colonel. Sorry you are not able to stay and try again. You may perhaps later successfully woo fortune. See you tomorrow?"

"If nothing prevents, I will see you tomorrow, Monsieur Laudet," replied Colonel Vernaid. With that he bade his companions good night and left.

He was shown out with the same punctilious care with which he was shown in. In the meanwhile at the hour agreed upon, three vehicles slowly wending their way could be seen approaching the mansion described, and just as the hour struck twelve, they had arrived opposite the door. The vehicles halted and the driver of the first one alighted and was apparently engaged in making some repairs as though something had gone wrong with the harness.

At this moment the massive door of the mansion opened, and Colonel Vernaid was seen at the threshold, lighting a cigar with deliberation. The driver of the vehicle approached the Colonel and

politely asked him for a match, saying that something had gone wrong with the harness. This was a gendarme in disguise. While he was asking for a match, a voice from one of the carriages wanted to know what the delay was.

"Just a moment, Monsieur. I have broken a piece of the harness. I shall have it mended in a minute."

The cab door then opened, and a man alighted.

"You must hurry up," he said as he approached the driver. "We are late already, and we have still two miles to make."

"I will make up the time. Will Monsieur please be seated in the cab again?" respectfully rejoined the driver.

"Have you the time, sir?" asked the second man, approaching the Colonel.

In the mean while the giant doorkeeper evinced impatience to get the Colonel away in order to shut the door. No sooner had the second man come up, when he suddenly turned and grasped the giant by the throat, while his companion, the supposed driver, bore him down; and in a moment several gendarmes, jumping out of the cabs, assisted their comrade in keeping the giant pinned down, which they apparently found difficult, for even the Colonel had to come to their assistance. However, the doorkeeper was eventually overpowered, gagged and bound, but not before he had struck some heavy blows, not much to the relish of the gendarmes. When the cabs were emptied, there were eight gendarmes to be counted, and these with Reginald, Colonel Vernaid, Silas Thompson, Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon, and our three musketeers, brought the number to sixteen.

Two gendarmes were left at the outside door on

guard and to see that the doorkeeper did not free himself. Colonel Vernaid led the other thirteen through the corridor into the second ante-room, binding the second footman in like manner to the first. This was all done so dexterously that there was but little noise made, as the first precaution taken was to smother the victim's face with a large towel to prevent him shouting and calling for help, or from giving an alarm or a warning to the habitues in the main room.

The party then passed through the folding doors and entered the main room quietly and as unostentatiously as fourteen men could. There was instantly considerable commotion among the players, and lookers-on. Vernaid, without any hesitation, led his party to the table where just a few moments ago he had left Laudet and his companions.

When Laudet saw Colonel Vernaid approaching his table with the gendarmes and the others as though they purposed surrounding it, he immediately divined that he was the one that they were in quest of. He tried to make a speedy escape through a side door, but was intercepted by Will Burke, who had closely watched his every move since entering the room. Monsieur Laudet quickly crossed over to the further side of the room and drawing a revolver, he threatened to shoot anybody who approached him or laid a hand on him.

This threat did not apparently deter the gendarmes, for they crowded upon him until Laudet loudly shouted, "Stop, or I will fire!"

The gendarmes hesitated for a moment, while Laudet coolly looked over the faces of those in front of him, and recognizing for the first time

Dr. Vernon, he said, excitedly, "Oh, you are here, are you Dr. Vernon?" and quickly thrusting his unoccupied hand into the bosom of his coat, he rapidly withdrew a large envelope, and throwing it directly at Dr. Vernon, said hurriedly and in English:

"Here, Vernon, take this, and give it to my wife. It is for her. She lives at 682 *Rue de Richelieu.* Do not let her know how I died. I am not going to be taken alive. Keep out of the range of my gun when I fire."

The envelope fell at Dr. Vernon's feet, and he stopped to pick it up; but before he straightened himself, he heard several shots in rapid succession. The gendarmes thinking that they saw an opportunity of catching Laudet off his guard as he threw the envelope to Dr. Vernon, dashed towards him, but Laudet, true to his word, fired point blank at them.

One gendarme was shot through the right shoulder, another received a flesh wound in the muscles of the breast, and a third, less fortunate, received a bullet in his jaw. The gendarmes now infuriate, poured in a fusillade of bullets.

Laudet fell, mortally wounded. He was shot through the neck, breast, both arms, and one shot penetrated his abdomen.

"Vernon, Vernon, quick, quick," he called out loudly, as the blood streamed from his mouth.

The doctor sprang to his side.

"Promise me to give that package to my wife, my Josephine? She has been—a true and noble—wife to me,—Vernon.—Bid her—good-bye—for me—Vernon.—Good-bye—and—may God—forgive—me." This he said in gasps, interrupted repeatedly by the welling up into his mouth of blood from

the wound in his neck. Being said in English, of course, it was unintelligible to the gendarmes and others, excepting those of our party.

The confusion and excitement following the tragic event was of course very great, and many of the inmates of the place hastily retired from the room.

"He is dead," said Dr. Vernon to the gendarmes.

"Let me see that envelope, Dr. Vernon," asked Colonel Vernaid. "I see it is addressed to Madame Josephine Laudet, 682 *Rue de Richelieu.* Perhaps we had better repair there after the gendarmes have arranged for the removal of the body."

"Fortunately not one of the gendarmes is fatally hurt. It pretty nearly came to being a shambles," said Dr. Vernon, as he busily applied himself to giving first aid to the wounded men, after which he ordered them to be taken to a hospital for further attention. This left him free to proceed, with his companions, to the address given on the envelope entrusted to his care.

"It will be as well to let the gendarmes know what is in the package," spoke up Colonel Vernaid. Dr. Vernon handed the package to the Colonel, who passed it on to one of the gendarmes apparently in authority, who tore open the packet, and found therein a paper upon which was written, "This is my last letter to my beloved Josephine. You will find, my dear wife, one hundred thousand francs deposited to your credit in the bank of France. It belongs to you. It is all that is left of your father's estate. The money is yours, and nobody can deprive you of it. When you receive this, I shall in all probability be dead. Do not make any inquiries. Farewell my adorable Josephine. Your loving husband, Alphonso Laudet."

"This is a personal letter to his wife. Nothing in it to interest us. You can keep your promise to Laudet, *Monsieur le docteur* and deliver this letter in person to her. There is one stipulation I must demand, simply as a matter of form, and that is that Monsieur Colonel Vernaid will be so good as to vouch for this letter being given to Madame Laudet. The Colonel is a French officer of high rank, and will give me his support should any questions arise later in regard to this epistle and letter of credit."

So our party then hastened out of the room, after having searched the body of Laudet, with the permission of the gendarme, for any further memoranda which might help them towards solving the mystery, but found nothing however.

Will Burke thoughtfully threw a purple mantle, which he secured from one of the couches, over the body of Laudet to hide the gruesome spectacle.

Thus died Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, a man most remarkable in his way. He had one redeeming virtue, for which he should be justly accredited, and that was the affection he bore his wife. He loved her in his own way. Although he had acquired a strong hypnotic influence over her, it had not been used excepting on one occasion for any ulterior purpose, and that was in this last plot which had ended so tragically and disastrously to him.

To do Josephine justice, she was absolutely unconscious of all that had transpired during those hours Laudet kept her under his hypnotic spell. All she experienced was a sense of weariness and lassitude. The influence he exerted over her was exercised so insiduously that she never even suspected that anything unusual had occurred to her.

At times she realized that there was something about herself that she could not quite comprehend, and a feeling of dreaminess and unreality would come over her which she found difficult to shake off.

Beyond this she was conscious of nothing. She was ever an active worker and took an absorbing interest in her household duties, and was sedulous in all that pertained to the care and well being of Laudet, for whom she bore a genuine affection. And he, as far as his habits and his nature would permit, was always solicitous of her comfort and her welfare. For years he had guarded these hundred thousand francs, and though at times he was in great straits for money he was never tempted to use it. He considered these hundred thousand francs the remnant of the fortune Josephine had brought him after the death of her parents, belonged entirely to her and he resolved, come what may, he would keep them for her, for he felt an inner consciousness that at some time something dreadful must inevitably happen to himself.

CHAPTER XIV

PSYCHOLOGY OF HYPNOTISM REVEALED

Josephine, like her sister Veronica, was inordinately fond of music; and, like her, devoted much time to it. She had but a few friends, and practically devoted her whole life to the well being and comfort of Monsieur Laudet. The death of her father so soon followed by Veronica's death, and later by the death of her mother, deeply affected her otherwise happy disposition. She often thought of her sister's husband, but dared not mention him, for Monsieur Laudet had sternly forbidden her ever to mention his name, for reasons already stated.

On this particular night, the night of her husband's death, she had been sitting up doing some fancy crochet work, at which she was singularly skillful. About midnight, without apparently any premonitory warnings, she passed into a state of semi-consciousness. While in this state she imagined she saw her husband lying stretched upon the floor of a large room, covered over with a purple mantle, that he was dead, and that she herself was greatly distressed. She was conscious of making several ineffectual attempts to recover herself. She remained in this semi-conscious condition for several hours. As daylight dawned, and her faithful maid Matilda was about to busy herself with her duties, a loud knocking was heard at the door.

Josephine was conscious of the knock, but was unable in any way to arouse herself. The maid, upon opening the door, was surprised to find a cab standing there with several men in it, and a gen-

tleman standing at the door, apparently the one who had knocked.

On interrogating the stranger as to his mission, she was asked if it were possible, at this early hour to see Madame Laudet on a very important matter. The girl offered to go upstairs and find out.

"I will wait here until you return," said Dr. Vernon, for it was he. The girl, finding that her mistress was not in bed and it was evident that the bed had not been lain upon, instituted a search and was horrified to find her mistress still undressed and lying unconscious on the floor. Greatly alarmed she ran downstairs and related the circumstances to the gentleman at the door. Dr. Vernon immediately offered his assistance, informing the girl that he was a doctor, and hastily explaining the situation to his companions he followed her upstairs.

Here he found conditions as the maid had represented. He diagnosed her condition as one of coma, and advised her being removed to a suitable nursing home or hospital. He assisted the maid in getting Josephine properly placed in bed, and went downstairs to consult his companions.

He finally came to the conclusion that it, perhaps, would be better if Josephine stayed where she was and a suitable nurse be procured for her, and that a Parisian physician be summoned to look after her. Matilda, the maid, who appeared to be unusually level-headed and intelligent, gave Dr. Vernon much useful information as to the physicians Madame was in the habit of consulting when she was in ill-health.

A physician and a nurse having been secured for Madame Laudet, Dr. Vernon repaired to his hotel,

whither his companions had preceded him. Sir Reginald, as may be expected, was much disturbed by this new turn of affairs. He still believed Josephine to be Veronica, although he had indubitable proof that Monsieur Alphonso Laudet had claimed her as his wife. He talked the matter over earnestly with Dr. Vernon. "What," he asked, "if Madame Laudet should die?" There would in that case be little or no proof to substantiate her identity. "What if Silas Thompson and Major Brosby should be right in their contention?" He said that Veronica had a double. This he did not for a moment consider at all possible. On the other hand, if it could be proved that Madame Laudet was that double, the whole solution of the mystery was achieved. But should she die unconscious, and nothing proved, then there was nothing left for him to do but re-marry Mary. In the event of Madame Laudet's complete recovery, and should his belief that she was really Veronica be verified, he could readily, under the circumstances, obtain a divorce from her, and then re-marry Mary. "But supposing," said Sir Reginald to Dr. Vernon, "should she recover, but with impaired mental faculties, that is to say, should she prove to be insane, in that case my predicament would be great. I should be able, no doubt, even then, to obtain a divorce, and re-marry Mary. But all this would entail much publicity." And from this he shrank.

As for Silas Thompson, he was in high glee. He was more positive than ever that this great mystery was on the point of being cleared up, and that his contention that Veronica had a double would be confirmed; but for the life of him he could not get Sir Reginald or any of the others,

for that matter, except perhaps Major Brosby, to accept this view of it.

There was nothing to do but to await the return of Madame Laudet's consciousness and her recovery. Sir Reginald argued, and even Silas Thompson and Major Brosby had to admit the soundness of his argument, that if Madam Laudet died without recovering consciousness, or would remain permanently insane, it would leave matters much as they were. Dr. Vernon assured him, however, that he did not think that this would be the outcome of the case, and his opinion, he said, was supported by the Parisian specialist who was attending Madame Laudet. There was nothing to do but to possess their souls in patience.

As regards Monsieur Alphonso Laudet, Sir Reginald Streetfield, with his usual generosity and kindly thoughtfulness, undertook to have his body properly cared for and interred. Should Madame Laudet be really Veronica, then there was no doubt that she had been the wife of Laudet for some time; or if not his wife, she had been openly regarded as such, and this was particularly proven after the last handsome and devoted action on the part of Laudet in sending her that letter by Dr. Vernon. All these circumstances prompted Sir Reginald and appealed to his generous nature to undertake the supervision of Laudet's interment.

Within a week from the day of her attack, Josephine regained consciousness, and almost the first words she spoke, were:

"I cannot tell what it is, nurse, I feel so differently from what I did. I feel more as I used to in those days when Veronica and I were always together, before I met Monsieur Laudet. I feel that

I have come out of a long protracted dream, and as if scales had dropped from my eyes. I cannot imagine what has happened. I am conscious of being transformed into another being, and entirely altered from what I was before I took ill. I cannot account for it."

"Madame is feeling stronger and better. That is why Madame says she feels transformed," replied the nurse.

"It is something here in my head, nurse. My mind I know has cleared. Those dreamy and hazy feelings that used to come over me for years have passed away. I am more myself, more like Josephine Dieulafoi that used to be, What is it nurse? You can surely tell me." Thus Josephine and her nurse would enter upon a controversy as to what was the cause of this renewed feeling of mental vigor that had come over her. Josephine remarked one day, "It is like an evil influence that has passed out of my life."

"Perhaps something has happened to Monsieur Laudet," ventured the nurse.

"Do not say that, do not say that. Anything but that, nurse. He was always good and kind to me. True he would leave me alone a great deal, then again he would stay with me for a long time. Has Monsieur Laudet been here since I have been ill?" asked Josephine.

"No, Madame," responded the nurse.

"He must be away, for if he knew I was so ill he would not leave my bedside. You must not think too harshly of Monsieur Laudet, nurse. I don't purpose to chide you however, I feel so peculiarly happy and joyous tonight. I feel as if I were a bird that has been given its freedom."

"Madame must please go to sleep, now. Madame

has spoken altogether too much," and Josephine would then compose herself.

In a few days the Parisian physician intimated to Dr. Vernon that he was now at liberty to give Madame Laudet her husband's letter, and also the news of his death, which was to be attributed by Dr. Vernon to some unfortunate circumstances. It was agreed that Dr. Vernon should interrogate Madame as to why she had assumed the name of Veronica Streetfield, while her real name was Josephine Laudet. As Dr. Vernon had frequently visited Josephine with her Parisian medical attendant, Madame Laudet did not think it anything out of the way when he called upon her one morning, shortly before noon. After making the usual inquiries as to her progress, he intimated to the nurse that he had something of a private nature to say to Madame Laudet. And when alone with her, Dr. Vernon said:

"I have some bad news for you, Madame Laudet."

"What is it, Dr. Vernon? It has something to do with my husband, I am sure," exclaimed Madame Laudet anxiously.

"You have guessed rightly, Madame. I have sad news in regard to him," replied the doctor gently.

"He is dead! Dr. Vernon! He is dead! I know it! I feel it! I remember distinctly now, seeing him that night, the night I took ill, lying on the floor dead, and covered with a purple mantle, in a large room where everything seemed to be purple, even the lights. Oh, my poor Alphonso! So good and kind to me!" said Josephine, crying softly.

"You are right, Madame. Monsieur Laudet was killed in a misadventure the night you took ill."

"Oh, Alphonso! Alphonso, my husband!" she

cried, and after a few moments she quietly asked, "And where have they buried him?"

"Sir Reginald Streetfield saw to that, he arranged Monsieur Laudet's funeral," replied Dr. Vernon.

"Sir Reginald Streetfield? Veronica's husband? Is he here? Here in Paris? Oh, my poor sister!" said Josephine in a greatly surprised and grief-stricken manner, and she burst into tears again.

We can well imagine Dr. Vernon's surprise. To him it was a case of confusion worse confounded; and he said in a little while, when he saw that Josephine had calmed down, and was more composed:

"You surely do know that Sir Reginald is here, Madame Laudet?" he gently asked her.

"I do not know, Dr. Vernon. How could I happen to know?" replied Josephine still in a surprised voice.

The doctor at this juncture felt that he would have to be very careful and discreet and not say anything that might bring about a recrudescence of Josephine's mental condition, so he cautiously asked:

"You of course know Sir Reginald Streetfield, Madame Laudet? You have seen him, have you not?"

"No, I have never seen him, Dr. Vernon, although I would know him from his photographs. Veronica had several of her husband's photographs with her when she died, and I have kept them all," replied Josephine.

"Did Veronica die, Madame?" asked the doctor very gently, intensely interested.

"Yes, Dr. Vernon. Dear Veronica died just a few days after our father. If you listen, I will tell you the whole sad story." With that Josep-

phine went over the story of her father's death, his wish to be buried in France, the bringing over of his body by Madame Dieulafoi, Veronica, Monsieur Laudet and herself, Veronica's accident while crossing the channel, and her subsequent death, and her burial by her father's side, followed in about two years by her mother's death, all of which she related in becoming simplicity and earnest sincerity, although she paused frequently to wipe away her tears, and to regain her composure. After this recital, to which Dr. Vernon listened with astonishment and absorbing interest and tactful attention, he said to her:

"How did it come about, Madame Laudet, that Sir Reginald Streetfield, your brother-in-law, had never heard about you, or your husband? In fact, he is even now utterly ignorant of your very existence?"

Then again did Josephine take up her narrative and tell Dr. Vernon all about her own romance with Monsieur Laudet, her marriage, her subsequent disownment by her family, and of the oath of silence imposed upon Veronica by their father at the time of her marriage to Laudet, and reimposed by him at the time of Veronica's marriage to Sir Reginald.

To this remarkable story, Dr. Vernon listened with ever increasing interest, and he was overjoyed to think that now at last was given the solution to this distressing mysery; but for one or two matters still to be explained he would be in a position to clear up the whole mystery, and these two points were, first, the absolute assurance of Sir Reginald Streetfield in the correctness of his identification of Veronica, as well as that of Major Brosby and Silas Thompson, for these last two, at

first at any rate, were positive of their recognition of Veronica. The second was her emphatic denial of her ever having seen or met Sir Reginald. He was convinced that if he could just have these two enigmatical points explained, he would have the whole mystery solved, so he said to Josephine, recalling Mr. Silas Thompson's theory as to Veronica having a double.

"Are you and Veronica very much alike, Madame Laudet?"

"I have already said we were twin sisters. We could hardly be told apart. Open that drawer there, the upper one on the right. You will find in it a small black box; please hand it to me. I have a photograph of Veronica and myself just before I married, and I will make a shrewd guess that you cannot tell who is who," replied Josephine.

Dr. Vernon, doing as he was told, handed Josephine the box, and she, taking a key attached to a thin gold chain she wore around her neck, opened it, and taking from it a photograph, handed it to Dr. Vernon.

When Dr. Vernon saw the photograph, he quite understood the certainty shown by Reginald in his recognition of Veronica. It was impossible to tell the difference—in the photograph, at any rate.

That question settled, the doctor proceeded to the next one. This, however, was more difficult of solution. He said to her: "You say Madame, that you have never seen Sir Reginald, although you would be able to recognize him from his photograph."

"No, Dr. Vernon, I have never seen him, but I would know him, I am sure," ingenuously answered Josephine.

"Supposing you had seen him. Do you think you would have forgotten the incident?"

"No, Dr. Vernon, I do not think I would have, replied Josephine in the same ingenuous manner.

"Supposing, Madame Laudet, you did see Sir Reginald Streetfield, and further supposing that you had forgotten about it, could you in any way explain that?" eagerly enquired Dr. Vernon.

"I cannot answer that, Dr. Vernon. I only know that since I am better of my sickness, I have come to myself. I seem to be a different woman entirely. I feel as if some evil influence has left me. I used to be so often in a dreamy and a dazed condition of mind. I remember once particularly, I got lunch ready for my husband; there were four of his friends, and he with myself made six. I prepared the table for six, but did not get food prepared, or wine provided. My husband came in to lunch with hampers laden with food, and with several bottles of wine. I did not know that he was to bring food and wine in with him; nevertheless, I had the table tastefully decorated, and set for six, and had dressed myself in my most becoming afternoon gown. I must have apparently known that I was to meet strangers. Matilda, my maid, you know her, asked me why I was getting the table prepared without preparing anything to eat or drink, and why was it that I was dressed as though to receive company. I could not answer her. Why I should have prepared the table for just six and why Monsieur should have brought just four friends in with him to lunch, and why he should have provided the food and drink, I could never well make out. Of course Monsieur Laudet bringing in the hampers of provisions may be explained by the assumption that he wanted to spare

me the trouble of getting lunch ready, but why should I so carefully dress for the occasion? I have never been able to satisfactorily explain all this, and I remember that after his friends had come and gone, I felt, oh, so tired and weary! Although I did not in any way exert myself, for everything in the way of food was brought in by my husband."

With this explanation Dr. Vernon had to rest content. He could only explain away the incidents connected with that lunch, and of Josephine seeing and talking to Sir Reginald and then not recalling ever having seen him, on the only tenable hypothesis, and that was hypnotism. This would explain the whole of the extraordinary occurrences. From his own professional knowledge along those lines he concluded that Josephine had been made a tool of by her unscrupulous husband.

Having arrived at this conclusion, Dr. Vernon proceeded to give Josephine her husband's letter, containing the letter of credit for a hundred thousand francs. Poor Josephine could not restrain herself from bursting into a rain of tears. Dr. Vernon patiently waited until she had quite recovered herself, and when she had, she said in a decided tone:

"Dr. Vernon, I want you to tell me whether or not I have ever seen Sir Reginald Streetfield. I want to know all the circumstances of the meeting, because I have felt at times that I have passed through scenes of which I can recall nothing. Please be candid."

Dr. Vernon recited to Madame Laudet all the incidents of that meeting as far as he could recall them, and showed her the letter she had written to Sir Reginald Streetfield in America, which he

had taken the precaution to bring with him. Madame Laudet admitted the authenticity of the letter, so far as the handwriting was concerned.

"That is certainly my writing, Dr. Vernon; but I cannot remember ever writing it, nor can I remember seeing Sir Reginald Streetfield. Perhaps it will all come back to me later."

To Dr. Vernon it appeared to be more and more clearly a case of hypnotic suggestion for a nefarious purpose.

Having nothing further to gain, he asked Josephine if she would like to see Sir Reginald Streetfield, who was in Paris as he had already informed her. This seemed to give Madame Laudet great satisfaction.

"Oh, do bring him to see me, doctor," she said, "please bring him. I have wanted oh, ever so long, to see and know the husband of my poor Veronica."

We will not try to analyze Madame Laudet's feelings very deeply. She was greatly shocked, indeed, to hear of her husband's death, but she was also greatly humiliated to learn that he had made a tool of her in his efforts to blackmail Sir Reginald Streetfield.

But his last letter to her, inclosing a letter of credit, for a hundred thousand francs, affected her keenly.

She was strangely aware, however, she could not explain why, that a great load had been lifted from her mind and spirits. She felt as she used to in those days of old when Veronica and herself were inseparable. It was a case of mental reversion with her. She had reverted to her original and natural state of mind.

It was several days before Josephine found her-

self well enough after this to receive Sir Reginald Streetfield. Notwithstanding the prudence showed by Dr. Vernon, Josephine had been greatly affected by that interview. In spite of all his many vagaries, and his irregularities, she had known nothing, of course, of her husband's villainy. Josephine was deeply attached to Monsieur Laudet, and although the revelation of his utter moral obliquity had greatly shamed and shocked her, nevertheless, she was deeply attached to him, and she could not help but mourn for him as became a devoted and affectionate wife.

Notwithstanding her distress over her husband's death, Josephine had to admit that in respect to her mind and in her inner consciousness that there had taken place a most remarkable change; and as the days wore on, she seemed to be able to reconcile herself to the death of her husband, and she expressed her desire to Dr. Vernon, who visited her daily with her Parisian doctor, to see Sir Reginald Streetfield.

She had now been out of bed for several days, and was able to perform little duties about the house; so when Sir Reginald called to see her, she was up and able to meet him downstairs in the drawing rom.

The meeting between these two can only be described as dramatic. To Sir Reginald, it was almost tragic. So great was Josephine's resemblance to his deceased wife.

"Oh, good sir," Josephine said, vainly attempting to suppress her tears. "Ah, how I have just longed and longed to see you, the husband of my poor Veronica!"

Sir Reginald had, after hearing the recital of all the mysterious elements in these adventures of

the past two weeks, resolved to meet his sister-in-law in a purely matter-of-fact way, so as not to cause her any added embarrassment.

Now that Josephine had been left absolutely alone in the world, he had further resolved to look after her, and to offer her the shelter of his home. Sir Reginald, with his traditional grace and sense of delicacy, refrained from dwelling much upon Monsieur Laudet. The first meeting of Josephine and Sir Reginald was one of mutual esteem and warm sympathy.

Josephine asked, in her own sweet way, after Mary, and his baby son and said how happy Veronica would be in heaven to look down, and to see his cup of happiness running over; and how they often conversed together; and how Veronica seemed to possess a presentment of her impending death and had told Josephine that she had a strong premonition that when her husband went out to the war in India, that she would never see him again; and she further told Josephine that should she die before her Reggie's return, to tell him from her that he was not to mourn for her all his life, but that he should marry again, and not spend his whole life in sorrow and regret. Moreover, that when Veronica found that she was to be the mother of the heir to the Streetfield title and estates, for she felt she said, that her first born would be a son, she seemed to realize that she must put aside all apprehension for her Reggie's sake; and how brave she was to be sure; but that on the night of her accident, on board the steamer crossing the channel, although it appeared to be so slight an accident and did not alarm their mother Madame Dieulafoi in the least, that Veronica had called her, Josephine, to herself and whispered

in her ear that she felt convinced that she was injured far more seriously than her mother supposed, and that the old feeling of not ever again seeing her Reginald had taken hold of her; and that she kissed Josephine, again and again, and said it was cruel that she would have to leave her Josephine also, so soon after she had found her again; and how poor Veronica's apprehensions, alas, came too true; and how she had said to Josephine, "Did I not tell you, my Josephine? I have been conscious of it all along. My poor, poor, Reginald! Oh! If I could but once see him before I die."

These sad recitals on the part of Josephine, tore open the partially closed wound in Sir Reginald's heart and a strong feeling of sympathy sprung up between these two.

When Sir Reginald had made several visits to her, he asked Josephine to accept the shelter of his home. She was greatly affected and genuinely grateful when she heard this generous and kindly offer, and she accordingly placed all her affairs in the hands of her brother-in-law.

When she was strong enough and able to get about, Josephine had taken Sir Reginald to the grave of Veronica, and Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, although there was nothing whereby to identify any of the graves, but Josephine well knew them, as she had often gone with her mother while that good lady was alive, to place flowers upon the graves of her father and Veronica. Besides, there was a wonderful chestnut tree that spread its beautiful branches over their graves, and she therefore could never be mistaken in identifying them.

Sir Reginald had suitable monuments erected

over the graves of Veronica and Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoi, much to the gratification and peace of mind of Josephine, who had long urged Monsieur Laudet to do the same, but he had persistently put her off. Now, she said, one great wish of her life was fulfilled.

As Josephine became stronger, Sir Reginald had introduced her to Major Brosby and Silas Thompson. To Silas Thompson, she instinctively took a great liking, and would persist in calling him Uncle Silas, like her brother-in-law. She invariably referred to Sir Reginald, as my brother Reggie; and towards Major Brosby too, she evinced a most cordial feeling, and the good humor of the Major and his quaint witticisms were often the cause of much hilarity.

We may well suppose that Sir Reginald did not lose any time in writing to Lady Streetfield at Great Hope, Tennessee; and while not giving her any of the facts of all those really amazing happenings since he left America, which, he said to himself he would acquaint her with when he got back; the joyous ebullitions only too apparent in his letters to Mary, led her to divine that all the difficulties he expected to encounter had been overcome. To Angus MacKenneth he had written more fully and comprehensively, telling him of all that had happened; but asked him not to acquaint Mary of the circumstances until he returned, as he wished to tell her all about them himself. He also told Mary that he would be home shortly with Major Brosby, and further, that he had discovered that Veronica had a sister living in Paris; and that she was all alone in the world, as her husband had died during their stay in Paris; and he said that he would, under the circumstances, like

to ask her to share their home, if Mary felt so disposed; but in case she did not desire it, he would place Josephine in the home of his cousin, Lady Travelyan in London.

We may venture a guess that Mary wanted Josephine, and she had written Sir Reginald to say that she ardently desired Josephine to be with her, and that she would be sorry and greatly disappointed if he did not bring her, but had left her in London with the Travelyans. There was some other news of an extremely welcome and gratifying nature, although surpassingly strange; and that was that there had taken place in George Wilcox a most miraculous transformation in character and behavior. This was also related to them by Angus MacKenneth and Lady Streetfield, and by Grace Vernon, George's sister, who had elected to stay at the Wilcox plantation during her husband's absence in Paris.

Grace's story was that on the morning following the night of Laudet's death—of which, of course, Grace knew nothing—George had awakened and had acted and talked so differently from what he had been doing lately, and had asked Grace where he had been all this long time; and further stated that his mind appeared to be quite blank; and that he could not remember anything that had transpired since his first return to Great Hope, the occasion on which his father had gone over to Paris to bring him home. Nor could he remember the fact that Silas Thompson, Dr. Vernon, and Sir Reginald had gone to Paris, and so much startled were his parents and sister by the exhibition of this extraordinary mental aberration, that his father had summoned a New York alienist to see his son, and that the learned doctor could not find anything

abnormal about George. He was given the whole history of George's strange behavior, and of his connection with Laudet, although he was not informed as to this last rascality of George, because, for the time being, that had been kept from Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, although Grace was cognizant of it. The learned doctor had given it as his opinion that some strange influence, which apparently had held George enthralled, had suddenly broken and come to an end. "It may be," he said, "the death of a boon companion. Did they know of any thing happening to Monsieur Laudet?" He was told that they did not.

But, be that as it may, George Wilcox was back to his own old self. He expressed himself as having been living in a peculiarly dreamy condition of mind, in which many of the events of the last year or so of his life appeared so unreal, as if he had awakened from a horrible dream, and it was only with difficulty he could recall any of them. Most of the deeds that had so distressed his family had passed from his mind as an evil dream. Anyhow, Mary and Angus MacKenneth had written to say that George was his old self again, and that he, on hearing that Sir Reginald was in Paris, as well as Silas Thompson, Major Brosby, and Dr. Vernon, had asked his father's permission to go over to Paris and join them, which permission his father had readily granted.

So much like the old George was he, that his father had made over to him, much to his amazement and gratification, the investments that he had made with the money George had sent home to his mother. Even of this George had not the slightest recollection. These investments had proved to be so profitable that his father had been able to

turn over to him two hundred thousand dollars.

We can readily imagine that the good news struck the quartet in Paris with amazement. It was, however, a joyous amazement, and when they were told that George Wilcox had already sailed for Paris, they looked eagerly forward to welcoming him there.

In regard to Josephine, after she had met Mr. Silas Thompson several times, one morning while they were all together, Josephine kept curiously eyeing Silas Thompson. So noticeable did this become that that gentleman was beginning to grow self-conscious and embarrassed. At last he spoke out in his usual direct manner. "Why do you look at me so curiously, Madame Laudet?"

"Uncle Silas, you must call me Josephine in future. I have adopted you as my Uncle. I will answer your question in the good old Scottish manner, by asking you another. Did I ever say to you, Uncle Silas, at any time, and very rudely too, that I did not know you, not ever having lived in the ark? There! There! It all comes to me now! The whole scene! and Uncle Silas, it is you who have brought it back to me. I remember it all so queerly. I was supposed to be Veronica, and abandoned in Paris by my husband Sir Reginald Streetfield, and I was further supposed to be in dire need, and I insisted that as Sir Reginald had deserted me, his wife, Veronica Dieulafoi, he was to pay me some fifty thousand pounds.

"It all comes to me just like that lunch party I told you of, Dr. Vernon, when I dressed myself in my reception gown and prepared the table for six, and did not prepare anything for the meal, and that my husband came in with four of his

friends, and with a hamper of prepared provisions, and several bottles of wine.

"Do you not remember me telling you about it, Dr. Vernon? Is it possible that Alphonso hypnotized me, and would that not account for the feeling of freedom I now experience all day long and have experienced since his death? It must have been Alphonso, Dr. Vernon, that prompted me to write that letter while under his strange influence. Do I remember George Wilcox? Yes, I have a faint recollection of a young man that lived with us a few weeks; and Alphonso said he had gone to America, for that was his home."

Dr. Vernon thought it wise not to encouurage Madame Laudet to proceed with her recitals. It would be as well for her, he said, not to overexcite her mind, as that might possibly bring about a relapse of her serious mental condition. He enjoined Sir Reginald Streetfield, Silas Thompson, and Major Brosby as well to avoid broaching the subject again.

They had all of them agreed that after George Wilcox's arrival, they would stay a week longer in Paris, and then go home via London, as Sir Reginald had some matters to attend to in England, and that they would take the opportunity of visiting Lady Travelyan there.

George Wilcox arrived in due course, and glad they were to welcome him. He was the same good, kind George of Reginald's college days and they agreed among themselves that nothing should ever be said of those lamentable events that had passed with George like a dream in the night.

Silas Thompson would rub his hands in glee and say, "Oh, how remarkable! How strange! Hod prodigious! But I knew he would come back. He was

a Wilcox and the Wilcoxes are one of the oldest families in Tennessee."

When George and Josephine met there appeared to be no embarrassment between them. Each of them declared that they had a faint recollection of having seen the other but it was very vague and indefinite.

During their last week in Paris another surprising event was to take place, which our readers can hardly conjecture. Sir Reginald Streetfield, who was in the habit of reading the London papers, saw an advertisement in one of them, by an eminent firm of lawyers in London, asking for any information that might lead to the discovery of a certain William Burke, who had gone to Australia when a child of seven years old with his parents, and that while there his father had joined the mounted police, but had lost his life shortly afterwards in an encounter with a party of bushrangers; and that his mother had shortly afterwards died, leaving the boy in the care of a settler called Michael Finnerty, an Irishman who had a ranch a hundred miles west of Ballarat, and that the boy had remained with Michael Finnerty until he was fourteen years of age; and that Michael Finnerty had died, when the boy went to sea, and was last heard of in Paris, when he must have been at that time about twenty-five years of age, but since then all trace of him was lost. Also that this William Burke could be recognized by a long scar over his left shoulder, which resulted from his being thrown into a hedge while riding a pony, when a boy in Ireland, sometime before his parents went out to Australia.

Sir Reginald immediately recognized his military attache, Sergeant William Burke, V. C. Sir

Reginald remembered that William Burke had recounted to him, when on that long-drawn out mission into Tibet, his early life, the incidents of which surprisingly fitted in with what he had read in the advertisement with so much interest. Further than that, Sir Reginald clearly recalled the incident of their swimming in one of the mountain streams of Tibet, and how he had questioned Will Burke about the scar on his left shoulder, and that Bill Burke had told him that his mother had often spoken of the time when he met with that fall off the pony in Ireland.

Sir Reginald immediately communicated with the firm of lawyers in London and learned from them that this William Burke that they were in quest of was Lord Burke of Berkeley, Ireland; and he, being the only son of the fifth son of Lord Charles Burke, and that as all the other heirs to the title and estates of the Burkes of Berkerley had died this William Burke was the legitimate heir; and they further stated that they had been for some time striving but without success to trace the heir to the title and estates.

Having received this information, Sir Reginald called Sergeant William Burke, V. C. into his room and said to him," Sergeant Burke, V. C., of Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment, I salute you Lord Burke of Berkerley, Ireland." You can well imagine that our Will Burke was utterly confounded with this news.

"But Captain," he said, after he had recovered from the shock resulting from the magnitude of the news, "I want to stay in the army, sir,—Will this prevent me, sir?"

"Being Lord Burke will not prevent you," said Sir Reginald. "You must get a commission, of

course, but that can easily be brought about. You will have to brush up a bit, and pass an examination, and then a commission will be given you. You do not have to leave the army; it will not be difficult for you to pass the examination, Sergeant Burke. I ought perhaps to give you your title now, Sergeant Lord William Burke, V. C. You will not have much difficulty in passing your examination. I am fully aware that you have been faithfully applying yourself to books for the last few years, to my personal knowledge."

Sir Reginald immediately wrote the London lawyers and one of their representatives was in Paris the next day, and found that the claim of Will Burke to the title was so clear that there was little to be done but to confirm him in it.

We can well imagine the surprise of all our party at this extraordinary news, but Will Burke was the most modest of them all. He would not abandon or break up the company of the three Musketeers and elected to stay with Harry Brooks and Phil Knox until such time as these two Musketeers left for America. As for Phil Knox and Harry Brooks, their joy was unbounded and their amazement beyond measure.

"I wonder what will happen to me next," said Phil Knox, sententiously one day. "I know I will be elected president of the United States. Failing that, it will be, at the very least, governor of Tennessee."

Now that all these surprises were well over, Sir Reginald Streetfield, Mr. Silas Thompson, Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon, George Wilcox and Josephine, accompanied by her faithful maid Matilda, for she could not leave her behind, and the three Musket-

eers, Sergeant Lord William Burke, V. C., Phil Knox and Harry Brooks left Paris for London.

When Will Burke reached London, he received the confirmation of his title, but he insisted on remaining one of the Musketeers and elected to stay with his companions until they sailed for America, after which time he purposed going to Ireland to claim his title and estates, and to take measures to prepare for the examination for his commission. All of which were duly arranged for him by Captain Sir Reginald Streetfield and Major Brosby.

Lady Travelyan and Amelia were delighted beyond measure to meet their old friends again, and more particularly were they pleased to welcome Josephine. They were greatly impressed, like all the rest of them had been in their turn, with her remarkable resemblance to Veronica, not only in looks, but in character, in disposition, and in deportment.

Dear Josephine. She was glad to be in London again, where she had spent so many happy days before those dreadful tragedies had overtaken her. She had now a new lease of life, and seemed to be just her old self again.

Sir Reginald Streetfield took the opportunity, accompanied by Major Brosby, of paying a hasty visit to Streetfield Manor, looking over some business matters there, and visiting the Rev. Dr. Sharpe, and also many of his tenants, who were delighted to see him again, and to these he gave a promise that he would shortly be back among them. While there he received a deputation from the county conservative association and pledged them that he would stand for the constituency of Streetfield in the conservative interest at the next parliamentary election.

Having arranged all matters to the satisfaction of everybody in Streetfield, Sir Reginald and Major Brosby returned to London, where, greatly aided by the entreaties of Josephine, they prevailed upon Lady Travelyan and Amelia to accompany them to America on a visit to Tennessee.

It can be truthfully said that Amelia was delighted beyond measure with these arrangements. It had been her great desire for a long time to visit the great Republic beyond the sea.

All matters being duly arranged, the happy party left for America on one of the great vessels of the Cunard Line—Sir Reginald Streetfield, Silas Thompson, Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon, George Wilcox, Lady Travelyan and Miss Amelia Travelyan, Josephine and her maid, and Phil Knox and Harry Brooks. But the right honorable Sergeant Lord William Burke, V. C., of Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment went back to Ireland, the land of his sires.

CHAPTER XV

A GOLDEN SUNSET

The crossing to America of Sir Reginald Streetfield and his friends was in sharp contrast to their going, so far as their feelings and peace of mind were concerned. Since last leaving the shores of America, they had passed through many adventures and experiences. Some of these experiences appeared so incredible, indeed, to the members of the party that they could scarcely believe that they themselves had been the chief actors in that bewildering and preternatural drama; but all that being now behind them, they had tacitly agreed among themselves to banish from their minds as far as possible and practicable the whole episode, if only out of kindly consideration for the sensibilities of both Josephine and George Wilcox.

This was Amelia's and Josephine's first experience on the high seas, and they, after a short interval of disappearance usual with those who first cross the Atlantic, enjoyed every minute of the voyage over. They never seemed to tire of hearing Silas Thompson and George Wilcox descant upon and extoll all the marvels of the New Land they were about to visit, and as their vessel entered the harbor of New York, they were more than ever absorbed in the many points of interest in the glorious panorama that spread out before them.

The stay of the party in New York was of short duration, as Sir Reginald and Major Brosby, Dr. Vernon, and Silas Thompson were anxious to proceed to their homes. Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox thoughtfully arranged that they should all go directly to

the Wilcox plantation and remain there a few days before dispersing to their respective homes. Mary was there with her baby, and so were Emily and Grace; but we will not describe at length the happy and joyous re-union of all these good folk; the sunshine of mind, the generosity of spirit, and the animation displayed; nor shall we say much about Lady Travelyan's, Amelia's and Josephine's hearty and affectionate welcome by Mrs. Wilcox, Mary, Grace, and Emily; nor how Mary had taken Josephine in her arms, and how Josephine's heart went out to Mary, and to Emily, and to Grace, and to Mrs. Wilcox; and how she fondled and cuddled Mary's baby; while standing by were Mr. Angus MacKenneth, Sir Reginald Streetfield, Mr. Silas Thompson, Mapor Brosby and Dr. Vernon, taking it all in, all of them, and looking so contented and happy. George Wilcox, too, was there, his old self all over again, teasing Grace and Emily as he used to in years gone by and so attentive, too, was he to Amelia, and kind and gentle to Josephine; happy indeed were Lady Travelyan and Amelia, looking so sweet and inspiring; and what a wonderful hostess Mrs. Wilcox made, rivalled only by the bubbling and bustling hospitality of her husband; and all these good people made themselves so thoroughly at home that one would have imagined that they had lived on the Wilcox plantation all their lives. The happiest days must come to an end, and when the party broke up, they scattered in various directions, Doctor Vernon and Grace to Philadelphia, Sir Reginald and Lady Streetfield with their infant son, and Josephine with her maid Matilda, and Major Brosby and Emily to their respective Tennessean homes, Silas Thomp-

son to his modest abode in the village of Great Hope, and Angus MacKenneth to his now lonely mountain home.

Lady Travelyan and Amelia were to remain the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox for several days. The separation was not for long, however, for there were journeys to and fro, and re-unions here, there and everywhere. Nor were Lady Travelyan and Amelia at any time, or anywhere, entertained with more generous hospitality than they were by the Wilcoxes, and by all the other people already mentioned. Of course Lady Travelyan and Amelia stayed a few days with Mary and Sir Reginald and Josephine, and then George Wilcox must needs come too to talk over some business with Sir Reginald, for he had undertaken the supervision of his investments and interests in America, and as for Mr. Silas Thompson, he was at the Street-fields almost every day, as of yore, much to the delight of Josephine, who had taken a genuine liking to the dear, kind gentleman, as she referred to him and indeed, often called him; and did not all the ladies go over to Mr. Silas Thompson's house, in Great Hope, one day for a noonday meal, Mrs. Wilcox, Mary, Emily, Lady Travelyan and Amelia; the only gentleman present being Silas Thompson; and Aunt Janet, did she not feel her dignity as she prepared a most wonderful meal for them, and were not all these handsome and high-toned ladies, as she called them, so gracious to her that she afterwards declared that it was the second happiest moment in her life, the first being, as she had stated before, the occasion of Sir Reginald's engagement to Mary MacKenneth; and there stood Silas Thompson, gleefully rubbing his hands; and saying audibly to himself, "How remarkable! How

strange! And how prodigious, to be sure!" But when called upon by Mary to explain himself, he had to confess the truth, and say that the remarkable, strange, and prodigious event was this selfsame occasion, when he had under his roof such a group of beautiful women, and further than that, two of them were titled ladies; and should anybody have made the assertion to him even a year ago he added, that he, Silas Thompson of Great Hope, Tennessee, would be entertaining such a distinguished company of ladies, he would have certainly considered that person *non compos mentis.*

And oh the meal that Aunt Janet prepared! The old office table was commandeered by her for the occasion, and right smart, as they say in Tennessee, did she decorate it. And when they sat down to dinner, Mr. Silas Thompson did the honors at one end of the table, with Lady Travelyan, the guest-in-chief on his right, Josephine on his left, and Mary at the other end facing him; the table literally groaning with the best that could be had in Tennessee.

Oh! It was such a wonderful turkey which Aunt Janet herself had raised, for she volunteered that information, and it was done to a turn, and Mr. Silas Thompson seemed to take extraordinary delight in carving it up, and urging upon his guests that this was quite an unconventional affair, and that they were, all of them, to do justice to Aunt Janet's cooking, otherwise, that dear old lady would most assuredly die of a broken heart. Then Mary must needs tell Lady Travelyan and Amelia that this was the very room in which Reginald had asked her to marry him, and for that reason, and besides being the room in which she had spent

so many happy childhood hours, she cherished an affectionate remembrance of it.

Never had there been such a dinner party at Silas Thompson's and perhaps there never would be again. At length the time arrived for the guests to depart, and when they were all safely and comfortably tucked in in their buggies, and after expressing themselves as having spent a very happy afternoon, they were driven away to their various destinations, and there stood their host under his beautiful poplar trees, gazing after them and rubbing his hand, as he said to himself, "How remarkable! how strange! and how prodigious to be sure!" And the ladies waved their hands and handkerchiefs to him as a last farewell, as they disappeared from sight.

Lady Travelyan and Amelia wanted to see some little, at least, of the great country that they had come over to visit, and Mr. George Wilcox volunteered to accompany them. Josephine also was to be included in this party.

Major Brosby and Sir Reginald Streetfield had now definitely concluded to return to England, more especially as Sir Reginald had accepted, at the urgent solicitation of the Streetfield Conservative association, the honor of contesting that constituency at the approaching parlimentary election, and his constituents needed his presence at home. The visitors had now been in Tennessee for over two months, and a wonderfully full and happy time it had proved to be. Lady Travelyan, Amelia, and Josephine, returned from a swing around the circle, as George Wilcox put it, after seeing and visiting many cities of interest. Of course they had to go to Philadelphia, and spend a few days there with Grace. From there they

visited Washington, the National Capital, Baltimore, New York, Buffalo, (taking in the Niagara Falls), Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, Louisville, and the Mammoth Caves of Kentucky as well, on the way to Memphis. They were highly edified with all they saw, and when they contemplated what a really small fraction of the country they had seen, they began to have a true conception and appreciation of the grandeur and the immensity of it.

All things were duly arranged for the departure to England of Sir Reginald and Lady Streetfield with baby William, who was indeed the veritable commander-in-chief of the whole party, and Mr. Angus MacKenneth, who had elected to accompany his daughter, as he purposed making his long contemplated trip to the Highlands of Scotland, and incidentally to spend a few weeks in travel in the British Isles and in some of the countries of the Continent. Then there were the Travelyans, with Josephine and Matilda, and Major Brosby and Emily, and that all too solitary musketeer, Harry Brooks. All these returned safely to England, having thoroughly enjoyed their visit, and Amelia was supremely happy at having had one of the wishes of her life fulfilled. Major Brosby and Emily went on to London, to be the guests of Lady Travelyan, and to give Emily an opportunity of seeing for a second time that city. Sir Reginald and Lady Streetfield, with Josephine, proceeded directly to Streetfield Manor, and we will not say anything of the genuine and hearty reception tendered the returning Master and the new Mistress of Streetfield, nor of the pleasure of the Rev. Dr. Sharpe on seeing Sir Reginald again; and he, in spite of his advancing years, was still hearty and hale.

Sir Reginald was duly elected to parliament as the Conservative member for that constituency, and took his seat as such in the next meeting of that body. As the months rolled on, Lady Streetfield settled down in her new sphere of life, and it would be only natural to suppose that her mind often reverted to the happy days of her childhood and young womanhood, spent amongst the simple folk and the mountains of Tennessee. After he had concluded his travels, Mr. Angus MacKenneth, her father, spent several weeks with Mary, before going back to his lonely mountain home. And he would miss his girl more than ever, he said. When she first married he had greatly missed her, but she was nearby then, and he often saw her, but now that she was to be separated from him by the ocean, and was to be so far away, it was going to be much harder for him to reconcile himself, he said to Mary, to the loss of his girl.

Major Brosby and Emily, after concluding their visit with the Travelyans in London, made quite a lengthy stay at Streetfield Manor, prior to settling down at Bath. Little William grew apace, and was more wonderful than ever in his father's eyes, and often as Sir Reginald gazed upon Mary and their growing child, his mind would revert to those early days of his own childhood, and to the thoughts of his sainted foster mother, Dora Brosby, and his noble and generous father.

Lord William Burke of Berkeley would also visit them, and he and Sir Reginald passed many an hour together living over again the wonderful and interesting experiences on that mission to Tibet, and the exciting incidents of the Afridis War. Lord Burke was no longer Sergeant Burke, but Lieutenant William Burke, V. C., having

passed his examinations in a highly creditable manner.

It was surprising how often George Wilcox simply had to interview Sir Reginald personally on business matters relative to his property in America, which did not appear to Sir Reginald, however, to warrant a trip across the Atlantic. But George would insist upon it, and it was still more strange that while he ostensibly came to see Sir Reginald on business, he spent most of his time in London in the company of Lady Travelyan and Amelia, excepting on the last occasion, when Lady Mary Streetfield had prevailed upon the Travelyans to spend some weeks at Streetfield Manor; and it was still further strange to Mary that on this particular occasion that her cousin George elected to stay at the Manor also, although his business matters had long since been discussed and disposed of; but truth will out at last, and George Wilcox confided to his cousin Mary, and to Sir Reginald, that he had long admired Amelia, and had made up his mind to ask her to marry him. Before doing so, he was going to ask Sir Reginald to do him important but a very delicate service, and that was to acquaint Lady Travelyan and Amelia with all the incidents connected with that period of his life which he always called his period of mental aberration. He did not purpose, he said, sailing under false colors. He wanted Amelia to know all about it. Sir Reginald Streetfield highly appreciated the lofty sense of honor and principle that prompted George to do this, and quite agreed with him that it was the only right and proper thing to do. Sir Reginald laid the whole story before Lady Travelyan and Amelia, and how highly indeed did they think of Mr. Wilcox's conduct in being so in-

genuous and candid with them. "As for Amelia," Lady Travelyan said, "She has a liking for Mr. George Wilcox, and I am sure he has only to ask her, and I for one would not say nay, for I know him to be a thoroughly good, honorable, and upright man. "And has he not," she asked, "demonstrated that by his openness and candor in insisting upon our knowing all the details of that unfortunate period of his life?"

The good news was carried back to George, and we may well imagine that he lost no time in bringing the matter to its only conclusion, and it was soon definitely announced that Miss Amelia Travelyan, daughter of the late Sir Henry Travelyan, K. C. S. I. of the Indian Civil Service, and of Lady Travelyan of Grosvenor Square, London, was engaged to be married to George Wilcox, Esquire, of Great Hope Tennessee, U. S. A., but that the marriage was not to take place until the following year. Some months had now passed, and both Amelia and George were looking forward to the coming event. Josephine in the meantime was quite happy and contented in Streetfield Manor. The affectionate solicitude of Mary and Sir Reginald touched her keenly, and all the affection of her ardent nature went out to them. Mary would often say to Sir Reginald, "What should we ever have done without Josephine, Reggie?"

"I am sure I do not know, Mary. She has become so much a part of our household that it is difficult to say how we could get along without her," replied Reginald to Mary's question. Ah, but you, Mary, and you, Sir Reginald, you will nevertheless have to get along without Josephine for you do not observe that his lordship Lieut. Lord William Burke, V. C., has been making fre-

quent journeys to Streetfield Manor; and why did you not have the faintest trace of a suspicion of these two? Of course, you might excuse yourselves by saying that Josephine and Lord William Burke conversed a great deal in French when by themselves, and what they said was only known to themselves. Josephine and Lord Burke, who had rather a fine voice, would often sing French songs together, the words of which were not very intelligible to Mary, and less so to Sir Reginald, and they read French books together; and on one occasion Lord Burke remarked to Sir Reginald, "Is it not extraordinary, Streetfield, how I am brushing up my French?"

Of course Lord Burke was brushing up his French, and he brushed it up to such a degree that it shone like a mirror, in which he saw reflected the mighty love of a chaste and great-souled woman. One day he broke the news to Sir Reginald and said to him, "I have come to you, Sir Reginald Streetfield, as I consider you 'in loco parentis,' de facto, if not de jure, of Josephine, and I am going, with your permission, to bring these French lessons of mine to a dramatic close, by asking my charming French instructor to become Lady Burke."

All this was in a way surprising to Sir Reginald, who greatly admired Josephine, and as the twin sister of his dear Veronica he was sincerely attached to her. To him she had become indeed a sister, and to Mary as well.

"Well, Lord Burke," said Sir Reginald. "It will be hard for Mary and me to lose Josephine, but we know that you will take as great care of her as we have. You have my best wishes—you have proved yourself to be one of nature's noblemen,

apart from any title you may now possess. Go in, Burke, and good luck to you."

As all Lord Burke's courtship was mostly carried on in French, we do not purpose translating what was said, whether by Josephine or Lord Burke. Sufficient to say, whether in French or in English, the result would have been exactly the same. Josephine consented to become Lady Burke of Berkerley.

When Emily Brosby heard the news, nothing would satisfy her but a double event. The first and only one that she was present at, she declared, was that of Dr. Vernon and Grace Wilcox and of Major Brosby and herself, then she was one of the principals. She had ever since been desirous of witnessing a double wedding, in which she would be but a humble spectator, and here was an excellent opportunity. She approached Lord Burke and Josephine and Mary on the subject, and Mary, falling in with the idea, broached it to Sir Reginald and he in his turn induced Lady Travelyan to consent.

"We shall have it at Streetfield Manor," said Mary, and Mary's every wish was a command. "Lady Travelyan," she added, "will be glad to have it there too."

It was just three months to the day set for Amelia's and George's wedding, and Lord Burke and Josephine agreed to wait until then. Besides, Lord Burke said, the additional time would give him an opportunity to become more proficient in French. Ample time was thus provided to have George's parents come over, also Dr. Vernon and Grace, and Mr. Angus MacKenneth, and last but not least, Mr. Silas Thompson.

Sir Reginald and George Wilcox and Mary said

it was unthinkable not to have Silas Thompson present, and then Josephine, did she not ask in her inexpressibly sweet, innocent way, "Are you not going to have the good, kind man come to my wedding?"

So it was settled that Uncle Silas was to come. Lady Travelyan was to undertake the supervision of the wedding breakfast. The folk from Tennessee were to be present. The Rev. Dr. Sharpe was to officiate. Nor must we fail to mention Edward Oglesby and his gracious wife. The wedding was indeed a pretty event. There were present all the officers of Lord Burke's regiment, (for the 110th had returned to England) in their brilliant and resplendent uniforms, not excepting Colonel Tom Tom, and glad was he to be there. His family, he said, were now marrying off all too quickly. There was Brosby, he instanced, who had to go to America to find a charming wife. It took a sharp-witted American girl, he said to Emily, to marry Brosby. Her English cousins were altogether too slow, otherwise Major Brosby, he was convinced, would have been married years ago.

The party from Tennessee arrived in good time, not forgetting Phil Knox, who wanted again to meet his former companions. So once more did the three musketeers meet under perhaps strangely altered circumstances, but they were still the three musketeers to one another, in the same old spirit, if not exactly in the same old way. We will not describe the happy gathering. Radiant indeed were Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox and Grace, Emily and Mary, as were in fact all the near and dear friends of George Wilcox on this happy and auspicious occasion.

Lady Travelyan maintained her high reputation as an entertainer in undiminished glory. And as for Silas Thompson, he was living, he said to Grace, in Wonderland, and, "Grace," he added, "I am going to say something to you, but you must not contradict me nor question the truth of my statement, as you must well remember you once did, on the occasion of your nineteenth birthday. On this occasion, I am not to doubted when I say to you, Grace Vernon, how strange all this is, how remarkable, and how prodigious!"

Strange, remarkable and prodigious as this event may possibly have been, it went the way of all events, it arrived, and tarried a while, and went rejoicing on its way, to become in time but a pleasant memory.

Amelia, after her honeymoon, went to Tennessee with her husband. Lady Travelyan stayed a few months at the Streetfields to become accustomed to her loneliness, as the poor woman said, and to reconcile herself to the absence of her daughter. Lady and Lord Burke spent their honeymoon in Southern France before going back to settle down for a while at any rate (until Lord Burke's leave of absence expired), at Berkerley, Donegal, Ireland.

There was one other matter that happened to Josephine while she was away on her honeymoon. It was no less than that Harry Brooks must needs fall in love with her faithful maid Matilda Broussard, and before Josephine's return, Harry Brooks had stolen her away for life. Major Brosby and Lord Burke, to show what good losers they really were, Brosby in losing his old and faithful military attache, and Lord Burke in the loss of an old and trusted maid of his wife Josephine, put their heads together and decided to buy out the

"Shaddock Arms," a highly respected hostelry in Streetfield, and they presented it as a wedding gift to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Brooks, and there they were established. Here Harry Brooks was wont to descant upon his many strange adventures in the East and West, and he came to be regarded by his customers as one of the greatest travelers that England had ever produced, some even going so far as to say that Harry Brooks, the proprietor of the Shaddock Arms, was actually in receipt of a pension from the government for his valuable geographical discoveries. Major Brosby, when in the vicinity, seldom missed spending a night at the Shaddock Arms; and when he did nobody was privileged to wait upon the Major but the proprietor; and at these times he was the precise, respectful orderly over again, and everything that was done for the Major, had to be carried out with true military precision. Lord Burke and Josephine would always spend a day at the Shaddock Arms when they visited Streetfield, to the great delight of Matilda. Josephine and Matilda would go over all their remarkable experiences, while Lord Burke and Harry Brooks were never tired of recounting the events of those days which Lord Burke said were some of the happiest in his life. And they would live over again those four wonderful days spent up in the mountains of Tennessee with those big-hearted friends of Phil Knox, people who, Lord Burke said, *never ceased scattering drops of kindness.* These were happy days for the two musketeers and they never failed to *lift one* to the health of that missing musketeer in far away Tennessee, Phil Knox.

Here we shall leave these faithful souls, Harry Brooks and Matilda his wife, leave them to their

contented and carefree life, and to enjoy the reward they most faithfully earned.

As the years passed, the Streetfields, the Brosbys, the Burkes, the Vernons and the Wilcoxes, increased and multiplied; and on one occasion the children of these five families and their parents had gathered at Streetfield Manor, and Colonel Brosby (for he was the Colonel of the 110th now), apparently never seemed to tire of placing the children in line striving to instill into them some of the elements of military drill.

"The future soldiers of Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment," he would say to them, although a good proportion of them were girls. When these little girls would remonstrate at their being made soldiers, because they were girls, they said, and could never be soldiers, Colonel Brosby would invariably reply, "That is true. You are girls, but you will marry soldiers when you grow up to be young ladies, so attention, girls! Right turn. Quick march."

Sir Reginald Streetfield, having resigned his commission in the army on his election to parliament, still remained an officer in Her Majesty's military service, for he had joined the Territorial Forces, and had been lately promoted to the rank of Colonel, and he would, when his interest required it, take a short trip over to the United States. On these occasions, he invariably would be accompanied by Mary, and they would never miss going to Tennessee, much to the delight of Angus MacKenneth, of the Wilcoxes, senior and junior, and of Silas Thompson, nor did they ever fail to visit Dr. Vernon and Grace at Philadelphia. Sir Reginald lived up to his first reputation with the inhabitants of Great Hope, and they were al-

ways glad to greet the English aristocrat, as they never ceased to call him.

Aunt Janet still kept vigilant watch over Mr. Silas Thompson and still guarded him against being paid too often in kind, as stated in one of our opening chapters, and as for Silas Thompson, he did not appear to be a day older than when we first became acquainted with him. In this respect he resembled Aunt Janet. Neither of them seemed to grow any older.

Phil Knox and his wife still gave faithful service to Dr. and Mrs. Vernon, except on those rare occasions when Phil Knox paid a visit to his friends the mountaineers around Great Hope, at which times he would consume large potations of moonshine whiskey. "I have to make up for my long spells of abstinence," he would say to the mountaineers, as an excuse, perhaps, for the large amount he consumed.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, senior, were the same hearty and hospitable couple that they always were; George and Amelia filled the old plantation home with romping children whose cheery voices could be heard as they played and romped on the long verandas that surrounded on three sides the commodious mansion.

Dr. Vernon and Grace were supremely happy together, and into their household had come a younger J. Douglas, and a younger Grace, and there was a Mary Vernon and a Reginald Vernon, too, for that matter.

As for Angus MacKenneth, he spent as much of his time in England as he did in his own mountain home, and he never seemed to tire of studying the history of the Clan Macdonald, and the Clan MacKenneth, and the other Highland Clans. Former

Lieutenant Lord William Burke, V. C., was now Major William Burke of Her Majesty's 110th, and he, with Lady Burke, were acknowledged to be the most beloved couple in that section of Ireland.

Another matter of interest which may tend to brighten the sunset of this story, was to be found in the sequence of events that followed the accidental meeting of Lord William Burke, in London one day, with the valiant Colonel Vernaid, of the African Chasseurs, he of the Chateau d'Eaulant episode. Colonel Vernaid had known all about the fortunate and surprising change in the affairs of the quondam Sergeant William Burke, V. C., but now Lord William Burke of Berkeley, Donegal, Ireland. He was prevailed upon by Lord Burke to spend a few weeks with him at his ancestral home. It so happened that Lady Travelyan was visiting Josephine at that time. The gallant Colonel, who had ever been pachydermatous to the shafts of Cupid, did, however, at this time fall a victim to the personal charms of the sweet and amiable Lady Travelyan. Great and sudden was the fall of this adamantine hero, and he, with true Gallic impetuosity, pressed his suit in so ardent a manner as to alarm that gentle lady.

Now Colonel Vernaid, as stated in an earlier chapter, spoke excellent English, being English on his mother's side. Thus he found little difficulty in expressing his sentiments to Lady Travelyan, which he did in a truly gallant fashion, as becoming a soldier and a Colonel of the African Chasseurs. But it has to be confessed that he did not persuade that fascinating widow to consent to the changing of her name from Travelyan to Vernaaid.

"But I do not intend marrying again," she said to him one day when he was more persistent than

usual. "I never did intend marrying after the death of my husband, Sir Henry Travelyan; and now that Amelia has married, I cannot contemplate doing so for one moment. It is altogether too absurd to even think of such an event, so please ask me no more, Colonel Vernaid!"

With this he had to remain content for the time being, but the doughty Colonel was as indomitable in love as he was in war, and although his chivalry would not permit him to say anything further at that time, he resolved nevertheless, to renew his suit on some future occasion.

Lady Travelyan, feeling that perhaps it would be better for her to keep away from the infatuated Colonel, left the Burkes to pay a promised visit, as she said, to the Streetfields.

When she arrived at Streetfield Manor, she found that Sir Reginald had there as his guest, Colonel Tom Tom. Now Colonel Tom Tom, as we already know, had never failed on sundry and all occasions to pride himself on his prowess in resisting the wiles and the charms of the ladies, as he expressed it. But on his being thrown so much into the company of the charming Lady Travelyan, he too must needs fall desperately in love with her, and he lost no time in making his sentiments known to her. Now, Lady Travelyan did not escape the Scylla of Colonel Vernaid simply to founder on the Charybdis of Colonel Tompkins. Colonel Tom Tom was not nearly so ardent and persistent a lover as the gallant French Colonel, and she was well able to keep him at bay. The gallant commander of Her Majesty's 110th foot regiment, when Lady Travelyan point-blank refused his proffered heart and hand, was greatly distressed and downhearted. "The only time in

my life," he said to Sir Reginald afterwards, "I have been hard hit, and then to be refused." And he too secretly harbored the determination to renew the attack on some future and perhaps more propitious occasion.

"A British soldier never gives in," he said to himself, "either in Love or in War."

In the meanwhile, Colonel Vernaid, having concluded his visit to Lord Burke, fell in with his Lordship's proposal to proceed with him to Bath, where the 110th regiment was stationed, and to take in Streetfield Manor en route. Thus it came about that the two Colonels were at the same time at Streetfield Manor, and both were ardently in love with the same woman, who herself happened to be under the same roof as themselves. Colonel Tom Tom and Colonel Vernaid soon became inseparable companions, and took great delight in recounting to each other their various and exciting adventures, and so confiding indeed did they become, that Colonel Tom Tom could not refrain from telling his friend, Colonel Vernaid, the secret of his great admiration and love for the charming widow. We can well imagine Colonel Vernaid's consternation when he heard that his friend, Colonel Tom Tom, was actually in love with the same lady as himself, and he, on his part, could not, he said, be any the less confiding in his friend than his friend had been in him, so he blurted out to Colonel Tom Tom that he himself was desperately in love with Lady Travelyan and that he had proposed to her and had met with a decisive defeat. "And what luck did you meet with, my good friend?" asked Colonel Vernaid, greatly agitated.

"A decisive defeat like yourself, Colonel Ver-

naid, although I attacked with my whole force, horse, foot, and artillery," replied Colonel Tom Tom sadly.

"Oh well! Then let us shake hands, and capitulate, my dear friend, and concede the fact that matrimony is not for you or me. If the lady will not take either of us, you may depend upon it, Colonel, she will not take anybody. We may flatter ourselves to that extent, at any rate. We must take it philosophically, *mon bon ami,* and although we have both been very thoroughly beaten, we must remember that we are soldiers. It will be of little use for either of us to return to the attack. It will only be distressing to the dear gentle lady. Let us agree to that. We will console ourselves by meeting often in the future. You must come with me to Tangiers, and be the guest of our regiment. What say you to that, Colonel Tompkins?"

"There is my hand upon it, Colonel Vernaid. I agree. I will accompany you when you go back. Let us go in and have a drink to cement the bargain, and suppose we both go together and tell Lady Travelyan of the bargain, and relieve her evident distress. I can see that she is unhappy."

So the gallant soldiers pledged each other, and drank to their mutual happiness, and then again to the happiness of Lady Travelyan, and to Sir Reginald and Lady Streetfield, and to Lord and Lady Burke and to numerous others besides, until the Waters of Lethe had banished from their minds all remembrance of their disappointment; and then they went, arm in arm, into the library. Shortly afterwards Colonel Tom Tom, who had a powerful voice, could be heard lustily singing "The Soldiers of the Queen," and when he concluded he was immediately followed by Colonel Vernaid sing-

ing in a stentorian voice, "The Marseillaise," until they finally sought the kindly aid of two great arm chairs, where they were soon oblivious, for an hour or two at any rate, to all the cares and sorrows of this world.

In the meantime, Lady Travelyan, as we may well imagine, was in a disturbed and distressed state of mind. The sudden acquisition of two such gallant suitors appalled her, and she had resolved to flee to her own home in Grosvenor Square, London, where she felt she would be safe, for the time being, from her ardent suitors. She soon observed, however, that the gallant soldiers had completely altered their bearing toward herself. They had, both of them, ceased surreptitiously to observe her with such languishing glances, and such expressions of despair. It was not very long before they, together, approached her; and Colonel Tom Tom, being the spokesman, stated to Lady Travelyan their resolve, and begged her never to feel any apprehension of having to go through any such experience again, at least, not from them. This greatly relieved her mind, which again remained at rest; but she, gentle soul as she was, could not help feeling sorry for the two really gallant and chivalrous gentlemen. But she had long resolved, as she had told them, to remain unwedded. This ended the only one romance in the lives of both Colonel Vernaid and Colonel Tom Tom, and they remained, like her, unmated until they died.

Lady Travelyan would often visit Amelia in Tennessee, and Josephine in Ireland, and Emily at Bath, and what with Tennessee, Streetfield Manor, Ireland, and Bath, she kept herself busy, as she flitted from one to another, as the spirit moved her, the same kind hearted lady she always was.

Sir Reginald's time was fully occupied with his military duties, his tenants and his estates.

As for Mary, she had enthroned herself in the hearts of the people of Streetfield, and was immensely popular with the gentry of the county, by whom she was greatly sought. At Streetfield Manor she reigned a queen, as indeed she was, in her own demesnes, and often did Sir Reginald and herself talk of those other days and of those other people across the sea, and nothing would do but that Sir Reginald Streetfield had to mention them by name.

"Yours will be the first to be placed on the list, Mary, among those I am about to name—Mary MacKenneth, the Pride of Tennessee, and her father, Mr. Angus MacKenneth; then I must name your old playmate and foster sister, Emily Brosby; then Mr. Silas Thompson, not omitting Aunt Janet. Then come Mr. Albert and Mrs. Wilcox and George Wilcox, and Dr. and Mrs. Vernon, not forgetting Mr. and Mrs. Phil Knox. Then there is good old Mat Stephens, who had so kindly undertaken to drive me around so much, and all the other good folk of Great Hope, Tennessee. What shall we call them, Mary?"

"How can I say, Reggie? Surely it is not for me to say! You have included me, dear, in the naming of them."

"I have it, Mary. I have it. It is the very best that can be said of them. I will call them 'TRUE GOLD OF TENNESSEE.' ."

END

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